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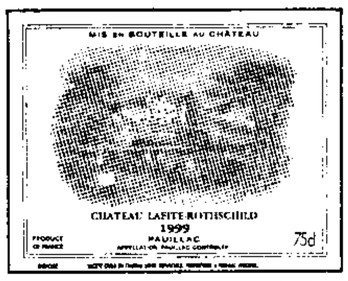

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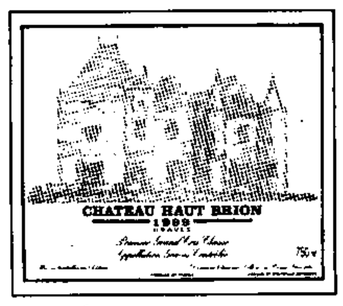
Pauillac - 1er cru classé

Ch. Latour
Pauillac - 1er cru classé

Ch. Mouton Rothschild
Pauillac - 1er cru classé

Ch. Cheval Blanc
Saint-Emilion
1er grand cru classé A



Ch. Haut-Brion
Pessac-Léognan, red
1er cru classé

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This case contains 2 bottles of each of the above chateaux.

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CHÂTEAUX	£ per 12 bottle case in bond ex VAT
Margaux	
Rauzan-Ségla	204
Brane-Cantenac	162
Issan	123
❤ **Giscours**	**144**
Cantenac-Brown	129
Palmer	462
Prieuré-Lichine	150
Tertre	117
❤ **La Tour de Mons**	**102**
Pavillon Rouge	177
Saint-Julien	
Léoville Poyferré	180
Léoville-Barton	234
Gruaud Larose	207
Ducru-Beaucaillou	297
Lagrange	159
Saint-Pierre	162
Talbot	156
Branaire-Ducru	144
❤ **Beychevelle**	**165**
❤ **Gloria**	**138**
Les Fiefs de Lagrange	90
Pauillac	
Pichon Baron	222
Duhart-Milon-Rothschild	138
Pontet-Canet	162
❤ **Haut-Batailley**	**138**

CHÂTEAUX	£ per 12 bottle case in bond ex VAT
Grand-Puy Ducasse	123
Grand-Puy-Lacoste	189
❤ **Lynch-Bages**	**240**
Lynch-Moussas	111
Armailhac	126
Haut-Bages Libéral	114
Clerc Milon	183
❤ **La Fleur Peyrabon**	**96**
Pibran	111
Carruades de Lafite	165
Les Forts de Latour	213
Les Tourelles de Longueville	111
Haut-Bages Averous	111
Saint-Estèphe	
Cos d'Estournel	273
Montrose	216
Calon Ségur	162
Lafon-Rochet	120
Le Boscq	111
❤ **Haut-Marbuzet**	**171**
Les Ormes de Pez	114
Tronquoy-Lalande	78
❤ **Bel Air**	**75**
Les Pagodes de Cos	120
Haut-Médoc	
La Lagune	126
Cantemerle	120
Belgrave	114

CHÂTEAUX	£ per 12 bottle case in bond ex VAT
Citran	84
❤ **Hourtin-Ducasse**	**57**
Lanessan	87
❤ **Peyrabon**	**69**
Sénéjac	69
❤ **Sociando-Mallet**	**171**
Médoc, Moulis, Listrac	
Loudenne	69
Chasse-Spleen	114
Poujeaux	126
Fourcas-Hosten	63
Pomerol	
Le Bon Pasteur	285
Clinet	465
La Conseillante	489
L'Evangile	738
Franc Maillet	111
Gazin	324
Guillot	120
Mazeyres	102
Petit Village	285
La Pointe	126
Clos René	114
❤ **Sales**	**114**
Vieux Château Certan *(per 6 bottles)*	261
Vieux Maillet	120
Le Jardin de Petit Village	120
La Fugue de Nenin	135

CHÂTEAUX	£ per 12 bottle case in bond ex VAT
Saint-Emilion	
Canon	273
Figeac	363
Clos Fourtet	252
La Gaffelière	252
L'Arrosée	234
Canon La Gaffelière	309
La Couspaude	267
La Dominique	234
Larmande	153
Pavie Macquin	354
Soutard	135
Troplong Mondot	273
Cros-Figeac	138
Faugères	114
Fombrauge	102
❤ **Grand Corbin Despagne**	**111**
Péby Faugères	234
❤ **Puy Mouton**	**93**
Sanctus	228
Le Petit Cheval	234
Virginie de Valandraud	234
Graves Pessac-Léognan, red	
La Mission Haut-Brion	489
La Tour Haut-Brion	201
❤ **Carbonnieux**	**135**
Domaine de Chevalier	189
Haut-Bailly	189

CHÂTEAUX	£ per 12 bottle case in bond ex VAT
❤ **Latour-Martillac**	**120**
Malartic-Lagravière	126
Pape Clément	252
Smith Haut Lafitte	189
Picque Caillou	81
Domaine de la Solitude	69
Graves Pessac-Léognan, white	
Laville Haut-Brion	387
Domaine de Chevalier	285
Latour-Martillac	117
Malartic-Lagravière	147
Pape Clément *(per 6 bottles)*	154,50
Smith Haut Lafitte	189
Domaine de la Solitude	69
Sauternes	
Rayne Vigneau	138
Suduiraut	183
Coutet	183
Climens	234
Guiraud	171
Rieussec	183
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Pavillon Blanc	189
Caillou Blanc	108

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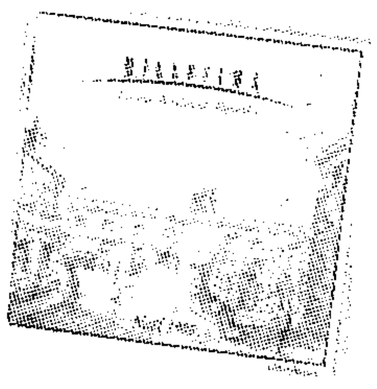

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ONCE AGAIN, England has lost out to Germany in its bid to host the World Cup 2006.

And the skills we have lacked have been the traditional ones of management, presentation, marketing and, above all, bribery.

There was a time when this country led the world in sleaze and England was feared and envied by all her opponents.

But alas – no more. The great names of yore have passed into history. Aitken. Fayed. Hamilton. Ecclestone *(shurely shome mishtake? Ed).*

We could once field a team to match any in the world. But now we have to face the facts. That as a backhanding nation we are a spent force.

But there is one man left with the experience and understanding of the rules of the game to rescue England single-handedly.

Step forward myself to run all England's bids from now on. In the words of that great footballer Winston Churchill, "I have the brown envelopes, now give me the cash and I will finish the job."

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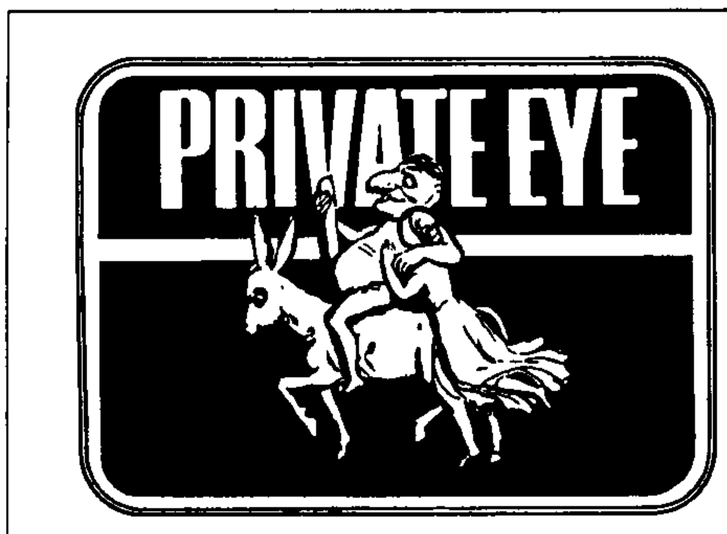

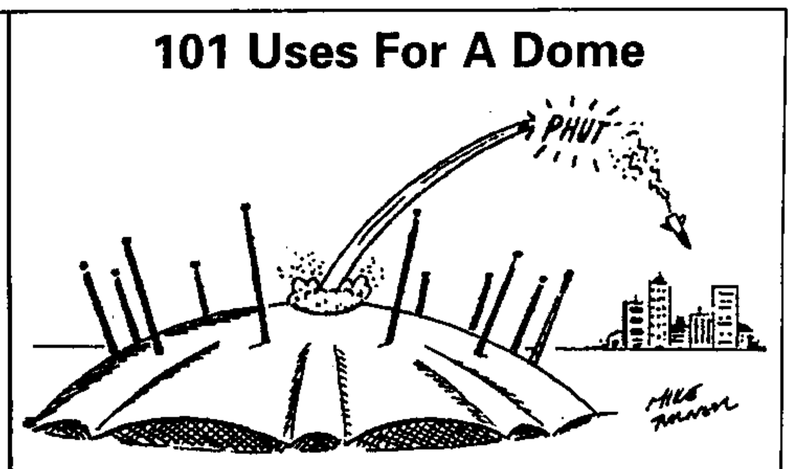

THE *Sunday Times* Insight team has claimed that details of Lord Levy's tax affairs were passed to the paper "by a source during a general investigation into tax avoidance".

And what a source! Documents stolen from the bins of Lord Levy's accountants were passed to the Inbred team by none other than Benjy "the Binman" Pell (see *Eyes passim*) during a general investigation into other people's rubbish.

THE Lottery Commission denies that it has asked for a copy of Tom Bower's "statement of defence" against Richard Branson's libel suit *(see letter on p.14)*. Which raises the question: why on earth not?

The commissioners are legally obliged to show "due diligence" in investigating the financial reliability of the two lottery applicants, Camelot and the Branson-led "People's Lottery". If they award the National Lottery licence to Beardie without bothering to examine Bower's allegations – or indeed the stories recently published in the *Eye* – Camelot will undoubtedly apply for judicial review on the grounds that the watchdog has been negligent in its duties.

POLICE have asked the crown prosecution service to consider whether the public display of cuttings from *Private Eye* could cause a breach of the peace under a statute dating back to 1361.

This pathetic attempt to stifle freedom of speech has taken place in Durham, where un-named "council staff" have complained to the police about cobbler Tony Martin's shop window (*Eyes passim*), which features cuttings from the *Eye* and the local press about the city council's woes.

So how could a bunch of old cuttings cause a breach of the peace? Because "something defamatory . . . may incite someone to put a brick through a window for example", according to County Durham's chief prosecutor. Cobbler Martin, who started his collection of cuttings in 1998, says: "The only thing it is inciting people to do is push letters of praise through the letter box."

THE water regulator Ofwat held a public meeting in Leeds on 6 July to discuss Kelda's (formerly Yorkshire Water) proposal to transfer its water and sewerage assets – and debts – to a new business owned by its customers.

Those talking up the planned mutual included its chairman-in-waiting David Perry and shadow managing director Richard Ackroyd. Their job is to negotiate the best possible deal in purchasing Kelda's assets to establish the non-profit making mutual.

Both men admitted at the meeting, however, that they are shareholders in Kelda, and therefore stand to gain personally from the sale. Ofwat have urged the two to renounce their shareholdings at the earliest opportunity. Whether or not they will do so before retiring Ofwat chief Sir Ian Byatt makes his "position statement" on the Kelda proposals on 31 July remains to be seen.

WITH perfect timing, British Nuclear Fuels Ltd (BNFL) has made public its plans to use Magrox, an experimental fuel, at Wylfa nuclear power station in North Wales, just as a two year dialogue with the environment agency over the future of the plant draws to a close.

The EA is currently deciding whether to renew the licence for Wylfa and the seven other power stations which BNFL took over from Magnox Electric in January 1998. Wylfa will be the station with the longest lifetime, possibly remaining in operation until 2021, if Magrox fuel passes the safety requirement of the nuclear installations inspectorate.

Nevertheless, at a public meeting in nearby Llangefni last month locals were understandably outraged that BNFL's macho new chief executive Norman Askew had waited until the very last minute to announce that the future of Wylfa depends on the untried and untested fuel.

ALMOST every speech on the health service by the prime minister and his health ministers accuses the Tories of wanting to privatise the service. But what about Blair's "new health network" launched with such a fanfare to produce a national plan for the NHS?

Almost every corporate backer of the network has a direct interest either in privatising the health service, or in squeezing money out of it. A central role in launching the network was played by accountants KPMG, who are financial advisers to 29 hospital PFI schemes. One of these, Dartford and Gravesham hospital, has been investigated by the national audit office. It found that the hospital made no savings at all as a result of KPMG's advice, though the number of beds was drastically cut. KPMG's fees were originally tendered at £152,000 but the NHS was eventually billed for £960,000.

Other interested parties on the network are Quest Diagnostics, Access Health UK, Boots and Superdrug. An important Network supporter is Chai Patel, chief exec of the private nursing and old people's homes firm Westminster Healthcare. He is on the government's health modernisation taskforce, and is constantly arguing for decanting bed-blocking patients in NHS hospitals into private establishments... such as those owned by Westminster Healthcare.

SIR ANTHONY CLEAVER one of the many distinguished businessmen in high places both under the previous Tory administration and under new Labour, must be following closely the investigation by the New Zealand auditor into the bid by the US multinational Lockheed for the soon-to-be-privatised British air traffic control system, Nats.

New Zealand interest in the bid arises from the participation in the bid by the New Zealand air traffic controller, the Airways Corporation. Several Airways Corporation executives have decamped to Britain in advance of the bid. One issue being studied by the New Zealand auditor is the possibility that some or all of these executives may be hoping to make a fortune from a successful bid for Nats.

FACT: Sir Anthony Cleaver was made a director of the US multinational Lockheed to strengthen that company's bid for Nats.

ANOTHER FACT: Sir Anthony sits on the government's prestigious committee on standards in public life.

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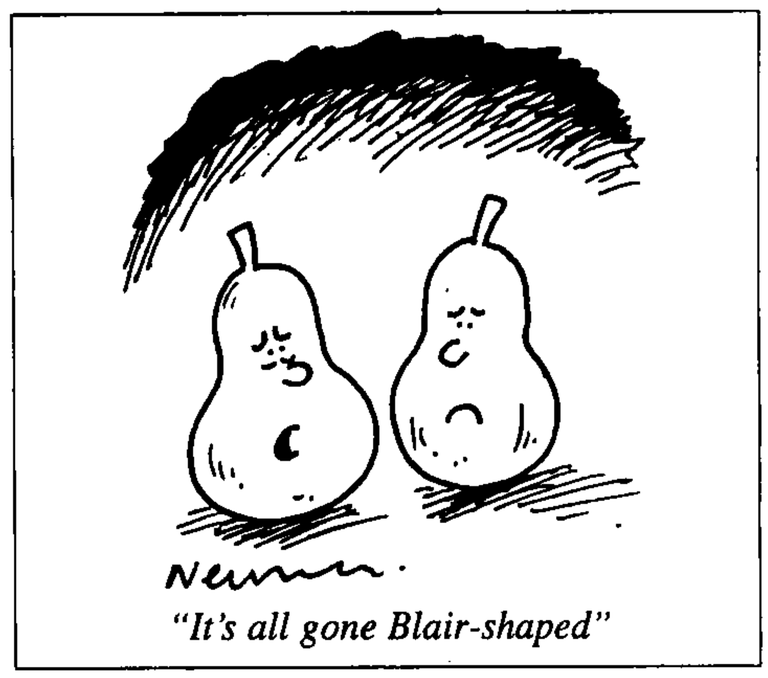


"It's all gone Blair-shaped"

Street Of Shame

LUNCHTIME O'BOOZE WRITES...

"THERE cannot be many people who did not drink themselves stupid at least once at Euan's age. For most of us, there is an alcoholic drink that, decades later, we still cannot tolerate because it poleaxed us once. Just the smell of grappa makes me feel sick..." – Mary Ann Sieghart, *The Times*.

"Four years ago, when I finished my GCSEs, my friends and I went to a bar where, if I can remember rightly (and I can't remember much), we drank flaming Drambuie all night..." – Bryony Gordon, *Daily Telegraph*.

"A memory: one tinged with the sour taste of cider and the lingering impression of a terrible headache. I was also just 16...I have never been sicker..." – David Aaronovitch, *Indescribablydrunk*.

"I was a teenage drunk too..." – Dominic Utton, *Daily Express*.

"Euan, I got smashed when I finished my school exams, so I know how you feel." – Brian Reade, *Mirror*.

"I've been done for being drunk and incapable..." – Mike Small, *Mirror*.

"It is a rite of passage to neck a few after taking your exams. I'd have got ratted after my O-levels if I'd had the money." – Paul Routledge, *Mirror*.

"Cheer up Euan, we've all been there..." – front-page headline in *Mirror*.

"We needn't make an example of poor Euan. Me, I've been there with him in my past – if not on the pavement, certainly falling off a bar stool." – Bel Mooney, *Daily Mail*.

"Don't worry about it Euan, we've all been there, son...It's a rite of passage. Some of us are still going through it at 46, never mind 16..." – Richard Littlejohn, *Sun*.

THE 6,000 people who flocked to Stonehenge at dawn to celebrate the summer solstice for the first time in 15 years provided plenty of fodder for journalists penning colour pieces.

Simon de Bruxelles interviewed a varied sample of the revellers for his article in the *Times*, including three witches moaning because the druids were getting all the attention, Lew and Ginny Pope, an elderly couple from Devon, and the Cotton family, celebrating their nine-year-old daughter's birthday.

Sean O'Neill writing in the *Telegraph* also succeeded in picking out some of the more interesting attendees, including three witches moaning about druids, Lew and Ginny Pope from Torquay, and, er, the Cotton family. Could it be that some kind of pagan magic was at work?

SUNDAY TELEGRAPH hack Alasdair Palmer has taken the moral high ground in his *exposé* of undercover TV reporter Donal MacIntyre, who is accused of using questionable methods in his programme on Medway care homes. But is Palmer's own record entirely unblemished?

Like MacIntyre, Palmer used to work for Granada TV's *World in Action*, and in this capacity he went to visit the pro-euthanasia campaigner Derek Humphry in the US in July 1992. "I talked to him about my views," Humphry later recalled, "as I do with scores of journalists... There was no mention of any screenplay or use of my life story." Two years later Humphry was rung by Palmer, who now worked at the *Spectator* and was writing a piece about the new euthanasia law in Oregon. Humphry again answered his questions. The subsequent article was so sarcastic about Humphry that Ludovic Kennedy sent the magazine a letter of protest.

Imagine Humphry's surprise, in October 1995, to receive an email from someone in Virginia, who had just been interviewed by Granada, congratulating him on having his "life story" filmed. "I found this astounding news," Humphry wrote. "I traced the person in charge, Ian McBride, who described himself as head of factual drama at Granada, and he agreed that his company had just completed a two-hour 'drama-documentary'... I was further astonished to read in his letter that Alasdair Palmer had 'researched' this film. In the final film credits, Mr Palmer is shown as 'associate producer'.

When the film, *Goodbye My Love*, was transmitted in January 1997, Humphry appealed to the Broadcasting Complaints Commission. It discovered that Palmer had given Granada "a clear indication" that Humphry would not wish to be involved in the drama-documentary – even though Humphry had never actually been asked. "Granada should not have relied upon what the researcher had told them about a meeting several years earlier. It finds that failure to notify Mr Humphry of the film and to offer him an opportunity to reply was not only discourteous but resulted in unfairness."

The BCC added that Palmer's film "was not a full and accurate portrayal of the story": it had given viewers the entirely untrue impression that Humphry "may have murdered his first wife" and that he was "a callous man" who put his work before his marriage. "This was unfair. Accordingly, the complaint is upheld."

HATS OFF to *Sun* hackette Marina Clifton, who revealed two weeks ago that Amanda Holden had been seen watching hubby Les Dennis perform in *Chicago* at London's Adelphi Theatre the previous Thursday.

It seems a shame to spoil such an important story by pointing out that Dennis had in fact taken the month off to record *Family Fortunes* in Nottingham, and didn't return to the Adelphi until 10 July.

GREAT MINDS think alike – especially if they read Associated Newspapers' freesheet *Metro*.

On 3 July, for instance, *Metro*'s London edition printed a letter defending Mo Mowlam's comments on the monarchy, from A. Tyson of London SW4. The selfsame letter appeared in the Scottish edition that day – but was attributed to "A. Tyson, Edinburgh". In the London *Metro*, Liz Pereira of London SE1 opined that too much fuss had been made about the Portuguese footballers' reaction to their defeat; the same thought occurred to "Liz Pereira, Paisley" in the Scottish edition.

And so it went on. Jo Wickham of Essex complained about prisoners' rights, as did Jo Wickham of Cumbernauld; S. McDonough of London SE3 and S. McDonough of Glasgow, despite being hundreds of miles apart, were apparently two minds with but a single thought.

There was, however, one notable difference. The lead letter in the Caledonian edition suggested that Scottish health minister Susan Deacon was "full of good intentions but bereft of actual clout in the Scottish cabinet". This was clearly of no interest south of the border, so the London edition led instead on a letter about the menace to pedestrians in the capital from speeding police cars. The letter about Susan Deacon came from "M. Lester, Livingston". The letter about police drivers was signed "M. Lester, London E4".

Are they by any chance related? Perhaps the Arthur Koestler professor of parapsychology at Edinburgh University will investigate these truly amazing coincidences.

QUICK! QUICK! There's a bomb scare and the police have told Security immediately to evacuate the Grey Lubianka, home of the *Daily Express* – even though it is right on first edition deadline.

As anxious staff swarm down the concrete stairwells to the exits, editor Rosie Boycott makes a rare appearance in the engine room to suggest that the paper's miserable sub-editors remain at their posts to finish the edition. But the cowardly hacks disloyally grab their coats and head for the safety of the pub, along with everyone else.

SUCH is the lure of dot coms that senior hacks in broadcast and print journalism are fleeing the corridors of White City and Fleet St to run free down the information superhighway.

Head of BBC television sport, Mike Miller, made media headlines when he announced in April that he was defecting to Worldsport.com, an internet sports news site set up by ex-Led Zeppelin roadie Alan Callan. He joined Worldsport's new managing director Brendan "Chucky" Parsons, the former deputy editor of the *Mirror* whose sporting prowess allegedly includes that paper's infamous "Achtung Surrender" headline.

Despite its wealth of editorial talent, and strict Buddhist values (Callan has banned all animal products from the premises, as well as alcohol), Worldsport looks increasingly likely to "do a Boo". A deal to sell the ailing internet sports wire to Texan conglomerate Hicks, Muse for a reported £20m recently fell through, leaving 200 staff who had been working gratis for a month "in good faith" high and dry.

On Friday 7 July around half of Worldsport's employees were told they had been made redundant. Those remaining have been asked again to stay on for no pay, while a desperate Miller and Parsons make a last bid to justify their ill-judged career moves.

THE DOTCOM revolution at the *Financial Times* has brought editorial innovation sooner than expected, with one bright hack creating an entirely virtual journalist, and drawing an extra salary accordingly.

The hack was revealed to have amassed about £10,000 in fraudulent claims for freelance work before being found out. Such "new economy entrepreneurialism" was apparently too much for the staid old *FT*, and the culprit was sacked.

The scam was remarkably easy to pull off, however, as FT.com's books are full of freelances, hired to plug gaps left by disillusioned hacks who have departed since the February relaunch. Even the offer of a £700 bung to stay on, ostensibly a bonus for putting up with malfunctioning technology, was not enough to persuade them all to endure the boredom of their dead-end dotcom jobs.

TO PUBLICISE its crusade against copyright theft, Microsoft invited Fleet Street's finest to a beano at a London nightclub, hosted by TV's Graham Norton.

The highlight of the event was a game in which hacks were asked to inspect a collection of designer goods – Levis, Gucci, etc – and decide which were the genuine articles and which the pirated fakes.

Alas, it seems that the hacks could tell the difference only too well. By the end of the "anti-theft evening", much of the genuine merchandise had disappeared without trace.

ANOTHER scoop for the *Times*. In its obituary of anti-apartheid campaigner Mary Benson, the erstwhile paper of record reveals that in 1964 she returned to South Africa and visited "Bram Stoker, the leader of the local Communist Party... Shortly afterwards Stoker was imprisoned and he died in jail".

No mean feat, given that Bram Stoker (author of *Dracula*) actually died in 1912. Could the *Times* by any chance have meant the famous anti-apartheid lawyer Braam Fisher?

More bizarrely still, the *Times* obit was reprinted in South Africa by Tony O'Reilly's *Cape Times* – but even there no one noticed anything amiss.

***INDIE* editor Janet Street-Porter's popular deputy Michael Williams is off work after fracturing his elbow while on a walking holiday in Tuscany.**

"How," ask unkind colleagues, "can he tell it wasn't his arse?"

SOAP UPDATE

GUSHY Anna Pasternak, author of *Princess in Love*, surfaces in the *Sunday Times* with an article about another woeful marriage – her own. Anna laments her failure to control her husband's Neanderthal domestic habits at an earlier stage of the relationship.

And who is the ghastly slob whose personal shortcomings have been plastered all over a national newspaper by his own wife? Step forward Wapping hack Bill Coles, aka the *Sun*'s "Eton toff".

HACKWATCH

Previous Convictions

THE CONVICTION of David Copeland prompted some thunderous moralising from the tabloids. According to the *Sun*, the "warped" and "deluded" bigot deserved to rot in hell: "Copeland is an evil Nazi whose heart is filled with hate. His attacks on gays, blacks and Asians were appalling."

Can this newspaper which expresses such pious horror at Copeland's bigotry by any chance related to the rag which has run countless attacks on "botty burglars", "pulpit poofs", "sleazy khazi cruisers" and the like since Murdoch bought it 30 years ago? In 1988 it described the Campaign for Homosexual Equality as "a force for destructive evil in the land... They deserve to be treated as pariahs. They deserve to be locked away where they can do no more harm". Ten years later, new editor David Yelland demanded on his front page: "Is Britain being run by a gay mafia?"

Sensitive *Sun*-scribe Garry Bushell has always been particularly careful not to fan the flames of prejudice. "It must be true what they say about nobody being all bad," he quipped in March 1990. "Even Stalin banned poofs!" In February 1992 he railed against "the cancerous pink mafia who are determined to glamorise their own perversion". In November 1998, he revealed that he was launching an "inqueery" into "limp-wristed" politicians.

But only a few months later, after Copeland's nail-bomb attacks, the *Sun* suddenly declared that "hate-filled fanatics" who seek to stir up prejudice against gays and ethnic minorities would not succeed: "There is a huge tide of sympathy towards the minorities. An attack on THEM is an attack on each and every one of US...We are a PROUD people. We are a TOLERANT people. We are a DECENT people."

Shome mishtake, shurely? In 1983, after Oxford police arrested 286 suspected social security cheats – including just four black people – the paper ran a cartoon suggesting that almost all the suspects were black. Three years later, when the Press Council ruled that the front-page headline "ARAB PIG" was not racist. The *Sun* celebrated the glad tidings with a cartoon showing a group of porkers advancing on Wapping, with the caption: "Now the pigs object to being called Arabs." The Press Council described it as a "tasteless and studiously offensive attack on Arabs in general which amounted to an ugly piece of racism".

Investigating a 1987 *Sun* scoop ("Freebie Trip for Blacks But Whites Must Pay"), the council found that "the headline, which was provocative and potentially racially divisive, was unsupported by the story beneath it". A year later, a *Sun* editorial denounced all Australian aborigines as "treacherous and brutal". In 1994, under the headline "No Zulus is Good News", gorblimey specialist Richard Littlejohn let rip: "Does anyone really give a monkeys about what happens in Rwanda? If the Mbongo tribe wants to wipe out the Mbango tribe then as far as I am concerned that is entirely a matter for them."

In 1996 Paul "Loonybins" Johnson wrote a lengthy rant in the *Daily Mail* calling for a British humanitarian mission to Zaire to be scrapped – on the grounds that the people out there were merely "blacks slicing each other up... and occasionally eating each other", and therefore unworthy of our charity.

In the last few months, the main target for both the *Sun* and *Mail* has been refugees – vilified in the *Sun* as "scroungers" and "spongers" who are "fleecing Britain". On 14 June the *Mail* ran a lock-up-your daughters piece about the proposal to accommodate 70 refugees near a Somerset village. These asylum-seekers – most of whom "are bogus and are on a gravy train to milk the social security system" – would apparently enjoy "a luxurious lifestyle" in dormitories at a disused boarding school. Worse still, they might visit the village pub and chat up local girls. "I fear the worst," one resident told the paper. "I have a 20-year-old daughter. I have been told things that sent a shiver down my spine."

On 28 June, days after 58 refugees were found dead on a lorry at Dover, hidden behind boxes of tomatoes, the *Mail* ran a cartoon by Mahood depicting refugees hiding on a lorry at Dover behind boxes of tomatoes. "I hear Mo Mowlam has asked the Queen to move out of Buckingham Palace for us," says one. Hilarious.

After he had been sentenced, the *Mail* commented rather mysteriously that "David Copeland was a creation of the pressures of modern life and the curse of its incessant message that to be popular you must be beautiful." Luckily, no one was tactless or tasteless enough to wonder if he might also have been influenced by another "incessant message" peddled over many years by, er, the *Daily Mail* and the *Sun*.

OH, YEAH? Mr Clarke (the Police Minister) said: "Actually, the Prime Minister was using a figure of speech when he talked of police officers frogmarching young hooligans to Cashpoints. What the Prime Minister was trying to do was to give an immediacy to his proposition that there needs to be immediate action to address the issue of violence and disorder on the streets". He added: "I am not trying to get off the hook."

– *The Times, 4 July 2000*

DIANA'S LEGACY

TABLOID headlines slamming "heartless royals" for "snubbing" the opening of the Diana, Princess of Wales memorial playground in Kensington Gardens provoked the Queen into a rare display of anger.

When the Palace was approached shortly after Christmas about providing a royal presence at the ceremony delicate negotiations took place between various royal staffs at private secretary level. Input was also provided by the Queen's spin doctor, Simon Lewis, and Sandra Henney who spun webs for Prince Charles until she became a casualty of the Fleet St spat over the rights to William's 18th birthday snaps.

The presence of William and Harry in front of the media on what would have been their mother's 39th birthday was ruled out from the start, as was the attendance of Brenda, who considered her presence "inappropriate" at what was billed as "a relatively informal event". Charles simply refused to go, pleading a previous engagement in the West Country. In the end it came down to a choice between the Duchess of Kent and Princess Alexandra, both friendlier to Diana than the other royals and both good with children, who would be at the opening in droves. But when the Palace found out entirely by accident that their *bête noir*, Diana's brother Earl Spencer, hadn't been invited everyone relaxed. Royal involvement was suddenly deemed unnecessary and the opening was left to the politicians and the mysterious worthies of the Diana memorial committee.

All went pear-shaped for the Palace the day before the opening ceremony when an unknown committee member phoned Earl Spencer and asked him along. Having established that the royals wouldn't be on duty Spencer turned up with his three young daughters who looked suitably innocent and solemn. Photos of the Earl and his girls at the opening were juxtaposed in the following day's papers with pictures of Charles laughing with nubile girl dancers at a Dorset school. Those pictures and the damning headlines sent Brenda into orbit.

Her private secretary, Sir Robin Janvrin, was summoned and had his ears chewed. He in turn kicked the collective ass of the press office. Prince Philip phoned his eldest son to tell him what a, er, chump he was. And Brenda, refusing to calm down, has now ordered an investigation as to why her press office took its eye off the ball, why she hadn't been warned that Earl Spencer was going to turn up, and why Charles hadn't been advised to stay at home for the day.

JUST FANCY THAT!

"A Downing Street spokesman said that Mr Blair had not spoken directly to Miss Mowlam about her suggestion that the royals should move out of Buckingham Palace. The Government is anxious to avoid giving the impression that they have turned on Ms Mowlam, who is much admired..."

— Andy McSmith, *Daily Telegraph*, 29 June, page 15, col 1

"Downing Street's sharp slapdown to Mo Mowlam... was deliberately brutal..."

— Rachel Sylvester, *Daily Telegraph*, 29 June, page 15, col 6

HOW TO DEAL WITH THE MEDIA PART 94

SIR RICHARD BRANSON is Down Under this week to drum up publicity for his new Australian domestic airline, Virgin Blue, which is due to launch soon. But behind the permagrin and razzmatazz there are signs that he may be a bit rattled.

Aussie hackette Helen McCombie flew to London three weeks ago to film an interview with Beardie for Channel 9's programme *Business Sunday*. After a few introductory pleasantries, she raised the question of whether Virgin Blue would be ready in time for the Sydney Olympics later this month, as promised.

"It'd be nice to get up and running by the Olympics," Branson replied, "but, you know, if they miss that date, they, you know, as long as they do the job properly, that's all that matters".

McCombie persisted, pointing out that the Australian regulator, CASA, doubted whether the airline was ready to fly. Whereupon the interviewee threw a spectacular tantrum.

Branson: "Do you know, I just don't enjoy talking to you any more to be honest...We're not having any specific date but anyway I'm not really interested in talking any more, sorry."

McCombie: "Can I ask you...?"

Branson: "No, no, I'm sorry, it's just, this is pathetic. I mean, I'm just not interested... Oh, just forget it."

McCombie: "Why don't you want to answer any...?"

Branson: "Oh, you're just being... I mean I just can't believe that you're trying to, sort of, desperately look for negative questions... I give you an answer and you carry on and on and on and it's just unpleasant."

NON RUNNER: Peace In Ireland

Leopardstown 9.15, 14/6/00, Racing Post website

IN THE TEAROOM

AMID all the exchanges of allegation and denial over whether Alastair Campbell did or did not tell *Observer* hack Andrew Rawnsley that Gordon Brown was "psychologically flawed", one very important fact is getting lost – *that the description is a completely accurate one*.

It would indeed be astonishing if an official spokesman were the source of the one unequivocal, spin-free, unexaggerated, straight-down-the-line statement to have come out of Number 10 since this government came to office.

The chancellor's capacity for nursing a grudge, his slow-burning resentment against Tony and Mandy, his feeling of being slighted by being awarded only the second most important job in government, did not disappear off to Radio 5 Live with Charlie Whelan. Rather, they persist in ever more accurate form, as the Downing St staffer Roger Liddle acknowledged in his cups last week.

Bolshy-Gordon-syndrome surfaced once again at Labour's policy forum in Exeter at the weekend. A face-saving formula had been agreed between Blair's team and the unions that the government would make a public statement admitting that the pound was "too high". This would enable union bosses to go back to their members saying that they had persuaded ministers to acknowledge their anxieties over jobs. The government, for its part, would not actually have to do anything beyond making a symbolic gesture – which is just how the PM likes things to be. But just as all involved were congratulating each other on a sensitive issue deftly handled, in came the news that Treasury spinners were out rubbishing the statement, saying it was nothing new and had no significance. The chancellor, it seemed, had taken umbrage at the teeniest, weeniest breath of criticism the concession implied.

Like a number of past superstar chancellors – Roy Jenkins and Nigel Lawson, spring to mind – Gordon Brown has come to believe that he and he alone holds the solutions to tough economic equations. His petulant insistence that senior ministers such as Robin Cook should be slapped down over Europe even when they carefully jump through all the "five criteria" hoops is causing real resentment.

True Blairites are beginning to think the unthinkable. How much more sullen cheek can Tony take from Gordon without looking a wimp? Wouldn't Jack Straw be just as acceptable to the markets and the City? No one wants a fuss before the election, of course, but if only Brown would realise that his return to Number 11 after then is not 100 per cent assured, maybe he'd step into line. But how to pass on the hint without sending the chancellor into yet another sulk?

'Urquhart'

"The Garvachy Road's nice this time of year"

LABOUR'S Millbank HQ do not want Ken Livingstone back in the Labour Party, but they are powerless to prevent the old newt-fancier from turning up at various fringe meetings at the Labour Party conference in September.

Millbank's famed press management skills will be hard-pressed to prevent the first big event of the conference being dominated by Leninspart. He is to be the keynote speaker at a meeting organised by the Left wing campaign for Labour party democracy on the Sunday morning. As such his droning voice will be the one to make it onto the evening news bulletins, thus eclipsing the majestic arrival of the Dear Leader.

MO MOWLAM may have been "slapped down" by Tony Blair over her suggestion that the Queen should move out of Buckingham Palace – but Brenda herself is right behind her.

Buck House is more of a rambling office block, art gallery and convention centre than a home to Brenda and Phil, who just have a small suite of rooms to themselves. When she doesn't have to be there, Brenda isn't. Born at 145 Piccadilly and having spent the early years of her married life in Clarence House, Brenda fought hard *not* to have to move into Buckingham Palace when she became Queen.

It is expected within the Palace that when the Queen Mother dies Brenda and Phil will move back to Clarence House and Charles will move his offices into Buck House from St James's Palace in preparation for his own accession. Buckingham Palace's state rooms would then be opened more to the public, a move favoured by Charles but opposed by Brenda, in an attempt to make the monarchy more accessible – and self-financing.

But Brenda has made one thing clear: She will allow Tony Blair and his chums to start hiring out Buckingham Palace to the highest bidders for parties and seminars. Palace research suggests that even without the Queen in residence it could bring in upwards of £10m a year as an international conference venue – a sum that would nicely offset the civil list. If Tony could pull that one off it would be the ultimate in public-private partnership.

ALL THE STOPS were pulled out for the Treasury press conference on 13 June in which chief secretary Andrew Smith buried the old Treasury Task Force and introduced its successor, Partnerships UK (which makes a handy acronym, PUK).

Cliches were in abundance – "the government's vision on public private partnerships"... "improved public services"... "hit the ground running"... "driving force in the area of expertise". Then it was the turn of the new chief executive of "this exciting new development", James Stewart. He drooled away about "more projects, greater speed, lower costs and better value for money". The new projects, he said, "will fill the void in the market place bringing together bundling programmes, developing commercial ventures as part of the government's wider markets approach and bringing us closer to the world of global e-business".

What did it all mean? The old Treasury Task Force run by Adrian Montague, who was brought in to the civil service from the Dresdner Bank, had run into the sand, and the supporters of public private partnerships thought it was time they were making a bit more money. The trick was to turn the new enterprise into a private company and pack the boardroom with ambitious City slickers, with only two directors nominated by the Treasury.

The private enterprise side of the new venture is now in complete control. There is no limit on the fees the new company can charge or the salaries it can pay. Mr Stewart, the new chief executive, who comes from something in the City called Newcourt Capital, starts at £200,000. The whole project is funded at the outset by the taxpayer, but watch out for these new vultures from PUK. They will be swarming all over transport, education and health looking for new "partnership projects" based on government property which can make big money for... themselves!

THE GOVERNMENT has only itself to blame for its current fix over petrol and diesel prices.

Labour (as did the Tories) has grabbed increasing wads of cash from drivers but invested practically nothing in alternatives to cars and lorries. Now that a sharp rise in oil prices is upsetting people at the pumps, the government is unable to argue that high fuel prices are part of a wider transport policy. It cannot point to any major publicly funded investments such as new light-rail systems as evidence that the money taken from motorists is creating green alternatives to the car that are convenient, comfortable and affordable.

Blair tried to claim the money was being spent on hospitals and schools, but that didn't wash because the connection between petrol and classrooms is too remote. Privatised bus and rail services in many parts of the country are so lousy and so expensive that voters are bound to be unhappy with a government that refuses to use even a recognisable fraction of the extra fuel duty cash to improve public transport.

Because this government is too sensitive to short-term public (i.e. tabloid) opinion to formulate and implement a transport policy, there is now a danger it will cave in to the vociferous pump protestors, who include the *Daily Mail* and the *Sun*. Concessions to motorists and truckers would reduce the money available for a variety of uses. That could mean lower subsidy settlements for the new 20-year rail franchises and for bus operators – causing the cost of travel by public transport to increase even further.

THE once mighty Transport and General Workers Union faces a further membership crash as the job axe hovers over car plants up and down the country.

UK plants such as Ford at Dagenham are vulnerable because of European wide over-production, but also because of the high value of sterling. So what has the union's general secretary Bill Morris go to say about the threat to his members jobs created by high interest rates? Er, not very much. For the sphinx-like Morris has apparently adopted a vow of trappism vow since the canny Gordon Brown appointed him as a member of the court of the Bank of England two years ago. Can it be long now before plain Mr Morris becomes the eminently more respectable Lord Morris?

HOW PARLIAMENT WORKS

THE Limited Liability Partnerships Bill (see *Eye* 1004) passed its third reading in the Commons on 28 June. Its only real critics, Labour MPs Austin Mitchell and Jim Cousins, both of whom had studied the Bill with care and proposed several democratic amendments to it, were not even allowed on the standing committee on the Bill, which was filled up with accountants, tax advisers and the party faithful.

Mitchell and Cousins were duly obliged to move their amendments on third reading. Austin Mitchell said the Bill gave a "dodgy, dirty deal to fat cat accountants' practices". That, he said, "should not be the responsibility of the Labour party and a Labour government."

Hounded by interruptions from the Tory benches, Mitchell and Cousins submitted a number of amendments to make it more difficult for the partners in big accountancy houses to use the new law to escape legal responsibility for the swindling of their clients, and to keep quiet about their vast remuneration. The minister, former NUM militant Kim Howells, listened carefully to what they had to say, and the amendments were duly withdrawn. Then it was the Opposition parties' turn. "We support the Bill," said John Burnett, Liberal Democrat MP for Torridge and West Devon, though he moved an amendment to make sure that "solicitors should not be discriminated against". Mr Burnett is a senior partner in a firm of Okehampton solicitors, and a partner in another firm in Tavistock.

Another solicitor who spoke out in favour of the Bill was Stephen O'Brien, Tory MP for Eddisbury. He doesn't practise any more, but he is a fellow of – and paid parliamentary adviser to – the institute of chartered secretaries and administrators. Another eloquent supporter of the Bill was Nick Gibb, Tory MP for Bognor Regis and Littlehampton, who writes a column for *Accountancy Age* and told the House that he started work many years ago as a tax adviser to what is now KPMG.

Nor was support for the new Bill confined to Tories and Lib Dems. A stirring speech in its support was made by Stuart Bell, Labour MP for Middlesbrough, another *Accountancy Age* contributor, who declared an interest as an adviser to another of the big five accountancy houses, Ernst & Young, for which he is paid £15,000 a year.

None of these MPs pressed their amendments to the vote, but the minister congratulated them warmly and the Fat Cat Accountants Bill slipped into law without a single division.

'Backbiter'

THE WAGES OF SPIN

THE APPOINTMENT of Simon Walker as chief spin doctor at Buckingham Palace will astonish anyone who has observed his performance as "director of communications" at British Airways over the last couple of years. If Walker spins for Brenda as he has for BA, we should get a republic by 2003.

Walker, 47, was a member of the glamorous Oxford generation that included Benazir Bhutto, Tina Brown and, er, Stephen Glover. After touring New Zealand with the Oxford Union debating team in 1975 he decided to stay on there and swiftly became a star political interviewer on TV – denounced by prime minister Sir Robert "Piggy" Muldoon as a "nitpicking smart alec".

Having become the Kiwis' answer to Jeremy Paxman, Walker then tried his hand at being Alastair Campbell. He spent four years as communications director of the New Zealand Labour Party, and helped to mastermind David Lange's election victory over Piggy in 1984.

So far so triumphant. Since then, however, success has proved rather elusive. After failing to be selected as a Labour candidate for the New Zealand parliament he returned to London to try his hand at financial PR, first with Hill & Knowlton and then at Alan Parker's slimy spin-factory Brunswick – whence he was seconded to 10 Downing Street in March 1996 to advise John Major on how to win the next general election.

Alas! But Walker's contribution to the Tories' worst drubbing in living memory did his reputation no harm: by 1998 he had somehow wangled himself a job as communications director for British Airways. Since then the airline has enjoyed a succession of PR disasters: the share price has fallen by a third, even while the stock market has risen by 20 per cent; the proposed tie-up with American Airlines provoked enormous hostility from both regulators and customers; the company kept its "ethnic" tailfins for long enough to get plenty of bad publicity, and then backed away – but still kept them on half its planes.

Walker became a slavish mouthpiece for chief executive Bob Ayling, sending hysterical and threatening letters to any hacks who dared criticise his boss. On 5 March this year, when the *Observer* reported that Ayling was about to be sacked, Walker went ballistic. "Ludicrous, laughable, totally untrue," he raged: Ayling's departure was "inconceivable". Ayling was duly fired the next day.

Clearly he is just the chap to restore the royal image. Before this latest appointment, Walker tried desperately to get selected as a Conservative parliamentary candidate. But the Tories, showing perhaps a keener instinct for self-preservation than the House of Windsor, turned him down.

Mayor's ball is back on menu

Gloucestershire Echo

AD NAUSEAM

AT THE Cannes international advertising festival this year's top dogs were Sony, named "advertiser of the year". The award "recognises the tremendous contribution of Sony to advertising creativity worldwide," gushed Roger Hatchuel, festival chairman.

Presumably this tremendous contribution does not include last year's mailshot for Sony's Playstation games console. Unwitting Playstation owners received manila envelopes marked "PRIVATE & CONFIDENTIAL" and "TEST RESULTS". The bumf inside included a "medical card" which said "I am writing as a matter of urgency with your scan results – they reveal early stages of a progressive condition for which I am prescribing immediate treatment" and so on. Included in the funpack were several X-rays of a skull. Only in the small print did it say "This is not a piece of genuine medical communication". The recipient was supposed to understand the immediate treatment prescribed was a trip to Dixons to shell out 40 quid for the latest Playstation games. Obvious, really.

The smart-arses at direct mail specialists Claydon Heeley, who came up with this stunt on behalf of Sony, apparently did not foresee, or care, what would happen when, say, a patient waiting for his MRI results stumbled upon this mindless missive. The complaints duly flooded in and the advertisers had to apologise. It turned out that the advertising standards authority had warned the admen against dressing-up the envelopes in medical garb, but they had chosen "not to follow that advice".

The ASA, the industry's impotent watchdog (motto: "legal, decent, honest, truthful") works, in the best traditions of self-regulatory bodies, on rules drawn up and enforced by the industry itself. It means that admen can put up anything they like in a bid to get attention; when everyone complains they get a wrap on the knuckles and take it down again. A hefty fine would be more appropriate – at least it would speak to the liggers in a language they understand.

Sony has an impressive reputation for this kind of thing. Another Playstation poster for a snowboarding game (dreamed up by agency TBWA GGT Simons Palmer) read like the confessions of a coked-up ad executive – "I need that white powder" etc. This was obviously going to be banned the moment it appeared (it was) - so why go to the expense of putting it up in the first place?

DOME FROM DOME

WHEN two sixth-formers this year spotted the amazing similarity between Lord Rogers' design for the millennium dome and the WonderWorld project which had been planned for Corby in Northamptonshire a decade earlier, a spokesman for the dome quickly dismissed any resemblance as purely coincidental.

But the plans for WonderWorld clearly show a dome structure supported by slanting masts, while the intended attractions included a body and an energy zone, just like the Greenwich folly.

Nor was WonderWorld some small local project that never came to the attention of such illustrious architectural dignitaries as Ricky Rogers. The plans for a huge leisure complex were drawn up by Ron Herron, one of Britain's greatest post-war architects, whose work includes the South Bank Centre. The leisure group Brent Walker and the French company Bouygues, the biggest construction group in Europe, were both major backers.

The main difference between WonderWorld and the Millennium tent, is that the companies financing the Corby dome realised it was not a viable project before construction began, whereas those responsible for the Greenwich dome lacked any such foresight.

JUST FANCY THAT!

THE STRONGEST supporters of the view that the Chinook helicopter crash at the Mull of Kintyre, which killed 29 people, was solely attributable to pilot error and had nothing to do with high-tech military equipment were air chief marshal Sir William Wratten and chief of the air staff Sir Michael Graydon.

Both men are now retired from the air force and work as top advisers to high-tech military equipment manufacturers – Wratten at Rolls-Royce Military Aero engines and Graydon at the French arms firm, Thomson CSF.

NOOKS and CORNERS

THE GOVERNMENT'S apparent dislike of the countryside is now having some very alarming consequences. At the end of June, North Norfolk district council's development committee recommended giving planning approval to a caravan site within Gunton Park, an area of landscape declared a conservation area by the same local authority 20 years ago and containing a site of special scientific interest. Lord Suffield's former pile on the estate was long ago converted into flats, while the park was carefully restored. Much of it can be freely enjoyed by the public.

Now a local farmer is proposing to blight the landscape with 100 caravans, plus ancillary buildings — seemingly with the blessing of the council. Why? Because, having been reduced to penury by the government, farmers are being encouraged to diversify. But if this development is allowed, there is every reason to suppose that other beleaguered farmers will make similar proposals, and no conservation area or beautiful landscape in Britain will be safe. Be warned.

EVEN by the standards of Cool Britannia and Tony Blair, I would have thought the Flax Mill at Ditherington outside Shrewsbury was an historic building worth keeping. Built in 1797 and listed at grade I, it was, quite simply, the first multi-storey iron-framed building in the world. It is therefore a monument to the dynamic history of Britain's pioneering role in the industrial revolution and the beginning of that astonishing development in prefabricated industrial structures which culminated so triumphantly in, er, The Dome.

The mill has been derelict for more than a decade, but now, after much effort and negotiation, there is a scheme by Maltings Developments Ltd and John Mowlem & Co. to turn it into offices, shops and apartments. Surely a good idea? The plan has listed building consent and the offer of grant aid from English Heritage. There was also crucial money promised by Advantage West Midlands, the government's regional development agency under English Partnerships, but this has suddenly been withdrawn. Why? Because the kitty is empty both in this financial year and the next. Unless the Treasury changes its mind, there is nothing either the department of culture or the government office for the west midlands can do. Oh dear: we will just have to hope the first iron-framed building in the world won't fall down. Meanwhile, of course, another £60m has been thrown at The Dome, whose structure is not required to last beyond the end of the year.

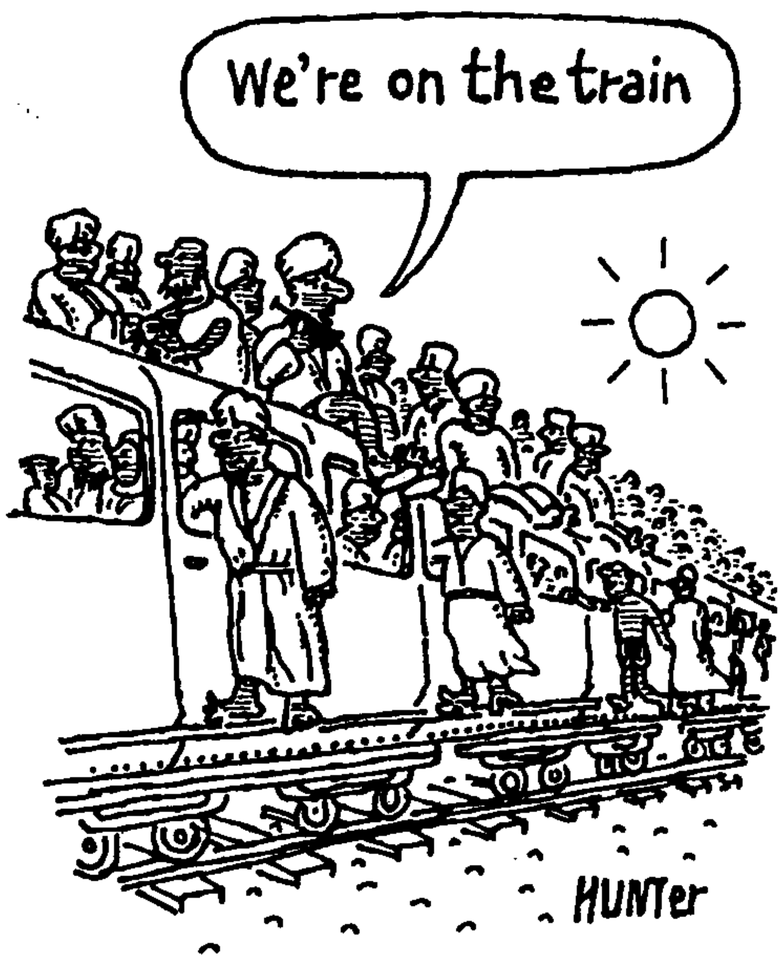
MY LAST victim is the Oban High School, which is scheduled for demolition Never underestimate the malice of the vandal, for in the west of Scotland fine buildings are discarded with impunity and the policy of local authorities seems to be to make the land look as much like America as possible.

The school was first built in 1890, but what makes it interesting are the alterations and the big extension of 1908 by John Alexander Carfrae. He was responsible for some of the best school buildings of the time — inventive, yet traditional and friendly.

Now the local authority want to pull the building to make way for a car park, and, perhaps, a new extension to the more recent and much inferior school buildings. Why? Because this was a decision made 10 years ago by the now-defunct Strathclyde regional council. It has been left to the newly founded Oban and Lorne civic society to fight the proposal and to point out that the option of retaining the existing building has never been examined or presented to the public. "The old building's construction is of such high quality that given a refurbishment period cycle of 70 years the building could continue for an almost indefinite period," they say.

Thirty years ago, the now-famous contemporary schools in Glasgow by Charles Rennie Mackintosh — the Martyrs' School and the Scotland Street School — were both to be cleared away by the city council to make way for roads. Somehow, sanity prevailed and both are now regarded as assets. Perhaps Argyll & Bute council might be able to learn something from this and accept that times have changed? Perhaps not. Lots of Carfrae's schools in Edinburgh are already listed, so Historic Scotland ought to list this one — quickly.

'Piloti'



SIGNAL FAILURES

Virgin territory

RICHARD BRANSON'S vision back in the early 1990s of how his private railway would work makes hilarious reading with hindsight. He promised to make train travel "fun", provide luxury carriages and "bring down prices". But passengers hit by Virgin's axing of the supersaver ticket — traditionally cheap, flexible and widely understood — are not amused.

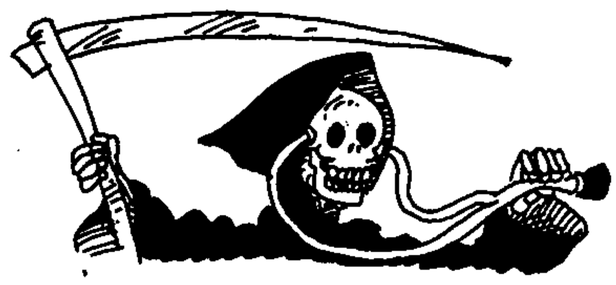
Paying Virgin's full fare does not guarantee luxury or "fun" — or even a seat. Last month an *Eye* reader found a professional woman who had paid £137 to travel between London and Birmingham squatting in a luggage stack to do her work. Major disruption due to engineering work this summer is no fun for passengers either, but instead of reducing fares to compensate Virgin has jacked up many yet again.

Virgin justifies its relentless inflation by whining that its subsidy is falling just as it is starting to pay £1bn for its future new trains. In reality Virgin volunteered the subsidy cut, in its desperation to secure franchises ahead of rivals, and the new trains are funded by banks, which will lease them to Virgin. Instead of publicly retracting that deception, Virgin has now exaggerated it. Chris Green, chief executive of Virgin Trains, berated the *Eye* (Letters, 1005) for daring to suggest Virgin was making rail tickets unaffordable without investing in automatic train protection, when Virgin was "investing over £2.8bn" in new trains which will have ATP in 2005. His conscience was not pricked by the truth that Virgin has not invested in ATP for its current trains, despite raising fares for three years, and that the new trains in which banks (not Virgin) are investing will cost about £1bn (not "over £2.8bn"). But credit where it is due — Green at least had the integrity not to deny Virgin was making rail tickets unaffordable.

Another truth Green knows is that "Flexibility has long been the Achilles heel of rail in its fight against road", as he told *Modern Railways* magazine. But if he is aware of rail's relative inflexibility, why has Virgin continued to replace flexible tickets in the lower price range (e.g. supersavers) with tickets that fix the outward and return journeys far in advance? Those tickets allow no leeway for travelling at different times or breaking journeys, and therefore make the country's busiest rail route even less flexible than road transport or the same route under British Rail.

But Green won't get a ticking off from above for bending the truth, because Branson is at it himself. Unveiling some bus links to rail stations, Beardie said: "We always promised we would bring back properly integrated public transport." In fact Virgin has ensured many of the cheapest tickets now available on Virgin routes are not valid on other operators' trains — destroying the integration that used to exist in the rail system.

'Dr B Ching'



DOING THE ROUNDS

THE general medical council was dead in the water long before the BMA conference debated a no confidence motion last month. If it can't spot serial killers and grossly incompetent surgeons, what chance has it got of detecting the thousands of basic clinical errors that go on in the NHS every day and at present pass without comment?

The GMC would argue that it's down to local hospitals and GPs to pick up the mistakes and murders and tip off the GMC who will then take appropriate action to protect patients. Or not, in the case of gynaecologist Richard Neale, who was barred from practice in Canada but allowed to carry on in the UK. As prominent GMC member Sir Cyril Chantler puts it: "In cricketing terms, we're not the wicket-keeper, we're the long stop." More like twelfth man doing a Euan under the table in the pavilion.

The United Kingdom central council (UKCC), the regulatory body for nurses, midwives and health visitors, is likewise living on borrowed time after the extraordinary inconsistency of its child porn judgements. Last April, nursing lecturer and sexual health expert (sic) John Howe was suspended by the UKCC after allegations that he distributed a pornographic image of an underage boy from the internet. Mr Howe, who is the secretary of the European association of nurses in aids care, was found guilty at Newport crown court last month. Police found hundreds of indecent images on his home computer, one of which he sent to a e mail address called "Jackboy's Boyheaven" with the message "Hi Jackboy, what pictures can you exchange? I think this is a little older than you like but tell me what you think."

However, there was no UKCC suspension for Edinburgh nurse and former Bay City Roller Derek Longmuir after he was convicted of possessing child porn downloaded from the net. As Unison's head of professional conduct Pete Marshall put it: "This certainly strikes me as being inconsistent. In both cases I would have expected suspensions. We currently have a member suspended for taking a drug intended for a patient. I don't think that's any less serious than a charge of handling porn. How would you feel if you were being nursed by someone involved in that sort of thing?" Thanks to his lack of suspension, Mr Longmuir is now appealing against his sacking from the Edinburgh royal infirmary with — unbelievably — the backing of the royal college of nursing. Trust me, I'm a nurse. Would you like to see some photos?

● **THE "local accountability" mechanisms that the government is convinced will nip bad practice in the bud appear to be having teething problems in Northampton.**

In *Eye* 1000, MD revealed how Dr Anil Jain, lead consultant radiologist at Northampton general hospital NHS trust was suspended from duty in October 1998 for auditing the breast screening service he was in charge of. This pointed to serious concerns about a colleague's work which he shared — quite properly — with his medical and clinical directors. The trust's view however was that Jain's audit was unauthorised and he was guilty of "personal misconduct for trying to discredit a colleague".

Various appeals and limited inquiries have taken place, none of which have been published. Neither has a convincing explanation been given as to why the "interval cancer rate" (cancers that appear between screening) is twice the national average in Northampton and the cancer detection rate has fallen by 30 percent in the period Dr Jain has been suspended. Instead, the department of health is resorting to off the record briefings to rubbish Dr Jain. MD has been sent a transcript of a taped conversation between a journalist and Tim Jones at the DoH, which includes the following. . .

Jones: "From my conversations with the regional office, what they seem to be saying to me is, what happened in this case is that Jain bore a grudge, er, I've, I've, this is very off the record, I've got to emphasise that. Jain has a history of psychological difficulties in the workplace going back many years."

Hack: "How long has he been with the trust?"

Jones: "I don't know. Erm, my information was that he. . . following a period of disturbance, as far as the trust was concerned, he'd had psychological treatment enabling him to do the job. Subsequent to that, when all this kicked off, he bore an enormous grudge against this particular colleague. . . I don't know the detail."

Hack: "Mmm."

The message is clear. If you dare to blow the whistle in the New NHS, expect your state of mind to be called into question by the DoH.

'Mad MD'

DOWN ON THE FARM

THE daring coup by the Iceland chain in going all organic on its own brand greenstuff – and with no price premium – has been hailed as a milestone in the success of organic farming. Well, so it is.

There is, however, a problem. The global trade in perishable produce is no more sustainable than industrial agriculture, involving ridiculous amounts of refrigerated "food miles" contributing to climate change and excessive traffic; besides the other evils of global agribusiness such as inappropriate use of national land and exploitation of workers. This conflicts with an essential part of the organic philosophy, which is the return of food production to the local economy.

All this is hardly Iceland's fault – they want the organic food now and Britain doesn't produce nearly enough. What this should do is send a loud signal to the dozy MAFF – this is the future and they need to help British farmers get in on it asap.

● **SPEAKING of organic, a curious phenomenon visible on farms at this time of year is the difference in attitudes towards set-aside land.**

Set-aside, laughably designed to reduce production and so ease surpluses and hold-up prices, is still compulsory at 10 percent of the arable area of each farm. On organic farms set-aside, often much more than 10 percent, is used as a vital part of the crop rotation. Sown with red clover, a miracle plant popular until the 1940s, the fertility and structure of the soil are regenerated and weeds are controlled, all virtually for free and without chemicals.

On conventional farms set-aside is seen as a waste and used for nothing. By July most farmers have sprayed off the weeds with a total herbicide to leave an ugly wasteland in a poorer condition than before. True, the rules limit non-organic farmers to 5 percent clover in the seed mix, but even that amount, creatively accounted, could achieve great benefits leading to a reduction in inputs in future years.

And rules can be changed. Lobbying achieved the derogation for organic farms, and MAFF's reasons for the 5 percent rule are derisory. So why doesn't the NFU lobby for this simple and cheap measure with its huge environmental and economic benefit? "Er, no one has ever asked us to."

'Gumboot'

ROTTEN BOROUGHS

USHAW THING

DURHAM city council is stepping up its policy of off-loading public land to developers on the cheap. Next in line for "regeneration" is the village of Ushaw Moor, to the west of the city. The village's recreation ground and children's play area – which residents were under the impression had been bequeathed to them in perpetuity 70 years ago – will make way for a 200-dwelling housing estate. Many locals angrily oppose the scheme, as there already exists a large site in the village with planning permission for new houses; and in the district as a whole there is permission for hundreds more homes than will be needed for years to come.

The Labour council's proposed "partner" in this venture is Keepmoat plc, the Doncaster-based housing company famous for its controversial links with local authorities (see *Eyes* passim) including Doncaster, Sheffield and Hull.

In 1995 Durham city council agreed to the company's proposals for the development of five sites. A joint venture company, Durham Housing Partnership (DHP), was set up, in which Keepmoat owns 81 per cent of the shares and the council 19 per cent (if it owned 20 per cent, there would have to be public access to its records). It is DHP which will develop Ushaw Moor. Council leader Maurice Crathorne is the city's director on the board of DHP. Two supposedly independent "community directors", Fred Burn and Colin Ord, hold posts in the local Labour party; Burn happens to be a neighbour and friend of Crathorne.

The "regeneration" schemes work like this. The city council transfers land, usually a public open space, to a housing association for free. The housing association is always either the Durham Aged Mineworkers Association (chairman Alan Crathorne, brother of Maurice), or the Three Rivers Housing Association, which also has close links to Durham's Labour group. The land is then developed by DHP, which always gets planning permission, even though building on public open space is against the council's own development plan. All of DHP's turnover is with Keepmoat companies Haslam Homes and Frank Haslam Milan, whose profits are hidden from the public and the district auditor (see above). About a third of the completed houses remain in housing association ownership and are let. The remainder are sold on the open market by DHP – with the lion's share of profits going, not to the people of Durham, but to Keepmoat plc.

Historical note: In 1964 Newcastle council boss T Dan Smith set up an "industrialised building firm" called Open System Building. In 1966 it was taken over by one John Poulson. It subsequently won a contract to build council houses in Pontefract using as agents a Doncaster firm called... Frank Haslam and Milan.

● **ONLY now is it possible to gauge the success of how Heather Rabbatts "transformed" Lambeth during her five years as chief executive. When she was appointed in April 1995 the audit commission ranked Lambeth as the worst performing local authority in the UK out of 442. Five years on, the commission has found that Lambeth is no longer bottom of the pile. It has been so "transformed" that it has moved up, er, one place, to be the second worst. Bottom of the heap is hapless Hackney.**

Rabbatts is now busying herself as chief executive of high-tech communications outfit Impower Group plc. Impower recently won the contract to bring the latest new technology to local government services across Britain. The revolution Impower will spearhead includes innovations such as being able to pay parking fines via mobile phones by 2005. Isn't technology exciting?

THE CLEAN MACHINE

IN LABOUR'S local government, it's one strike and you're out," declared the Rev Blair at the 1998 local government association (LGA) conference, raising hopes that he was going to make a serious attempt to tackle town hall sleaze.

Fast forward two years to the 2000 LGA conference, held last month in Bournemouth. Rotherham metropolitan borough council is represented by its brand new Labour leader, Mark Edgell. Alas it is revealed that Edgell, who gets £24,000 p.a. as council leader, and whose day job at the Department for Education and Employment in Sheffield brings in a further £30,000, is attending the LGA conference while "off sick" from the DfEE.

If some minimum-waged, privatised, pensionless street cleaner or dinner lady had been spotted at Wimbledon while "on the sick", thereby claiming remuneration for work not done, they would, no question, have been instantly sacked by Rotherham council. But as the new leader of the Labour group, the wretched Edgell is deemed too important to lose.

● **ANOTHER Labour councillor who insists he has done nothing wrong is Lancashire's deputy leader Frank McKenna (see *Eyes passim*) who had an early morning visit from Inspector Knacker last week. The ambitious Skelmersdale councillor, who also sits on West Lancashire district council, and council colleague John Fillis, were arrested and questioned for several hours by Knacker over discrepancies in the financial records of the West Lancashire constituency Labour party (first aired last October in *Eye* 987). They concentrated on evidence that the 1997 general election expenses return of West Lancs MP Colin Pickthall, for whom McKenna acted as agent, contained forgeries. Thickpall, home secretary Jack Straw's parliamentary private secretary, as usual has no comment. McKenna, at least, has an explanation for his troubles: he is the innocent victim of a sinister conspiracy between his political enemies, senior council officers and police.**

ERRORS OF JUDGMENT

Wakefield Labour councillor Chris Heinitz, regional chairman of Chris Smith's new cultural consortium, has resigned from some of his more irksome council committee duties after it was revealed that he had forged the signature of his agent on his election expenses. Last year, by the way, Heinitz, a non-cabinet member, claimed more than £24,000 in general expenses, more than four times the average backbencher. Will he now be forced to stand down? Will he be suspended? Not at all. Labour's local government supremo Howard Knight declares "The Labour Party expects the highest standards of conduct," but decides that Heinitz's forgery of a legal document is "a minor error of judgment".

Meanwhile Heinitz's council colleague Tony Dean also owns up to an "error of judgment" after it is revealed that he "volunteered" nine members of the council's housing department to leave their desks and help him canvass for votes in the May local elections. Dean steps down as housing chairman and exits the council's cabinet, but stays on as a councillor. Pony-tailed council leader Peter Box declares gravely: "The Labour party expects high standards of conduct from its members." Now where have we heard that before?

PS: *We have received some interesting communications from the Merseyside area of late, but need more info to go ahead — please contact:* murkeyside@hotmail.com. *Thanks.*

High Principals

SIR GEORGE SWEENEY, principal of Knowsley College and acting principal of the Sheffield College, celebrated his recent knighthood by announcing mass redundancies.

He wrote to all staff at Sheffield to tell them that lecturers' contracts will be renegotiated and "consultations" will be held with unions over compulsory redundancies — believed to affect at least 100 lecturers, managers and admin staff.

Blunkett-favourite Sweeney was brought in to run the college at the end of last year following the departure of former principal Ken Ruddiman and two of his senior executives, after it became clear the college was failing to meet financial targets. He was commissioned to undertake a six-month review of the college. His report, published on 7 July, proposes a more "federal" structure, including the creation of three highly-paid new posts of "principal". While Ruddiman was paid £100,000 a year to centralise the college, a new chief executive is due to be appointed any day now on £100,000 a year to, er, decentralise it again.

THE FORMER principal of Cricklade College in Hampshire, Richard Evans, was sacked in July 1999 for bringing the college "into disrepute". He and director of enterprise Bob Bradshaw and director of finance Mike Clark, had made misleading claims for grants from the European social fund which left the college with a £1m deficit.

Two damning reports into the college management followed, one commissioned from Pricewaterhouse-Cooper by the FEFC and the other the findings of an inquiry headed by former Acas chairman Sir Patrick Lowry. Bradshaw and Clark both took early retirement with enhanced pensions. Evans brought a claim for unfair dismissal and last month was awarded an undisclosed out of court settlement.

Andrew Murray, former business studies lecturer and NATFHE union rep at Cricklade, first alerted the governors to the financial situation brought about by Evans and co. He was sacked for his trouble in September 1998 and recently lost his claim for unfair dismissal.

PITY poor Education Lecturing Services (ELS), the company which argues persuasively on its website that colleges will benefit greatly from sacking their existing staff, and employing ELS supply lecturers on short term contracts instead.

In *Eye* 1003 we reported that ELS was on the verge of winning a lucrative contract to replace 597 part-time lecturers at the newly-merged Woolwich and Greenwich college. For some mysterious reason the college management has failed to see the light and has instead listened to union members, who have called off a threatened strike. The *Eye* sincerely hopes this is not the start of a run of bad luck for ELS.

Planning 2000

TV

Flat-Mates (Channel 4)
Big Brother (Channel 4)
The Secret Life of the Family (BBC1)

ONE of the traditional measures of a television game-show host has been how they dealt with rejected contestants: orchestrating an "aaaaaaaahhhhhh!" from the audience for the couple who get the tee-shirt rather than the car or holiday, offering a shoulder to cry on for the player who makes a mistake just short of the £1m question.

All that stuff, though, is for wimps now. The new generation of game shows delight in failure. The destiny of the contestants is no longer in their own hands – their ability to answer the questions – but is left to the vote of the other contestants or the viewers.

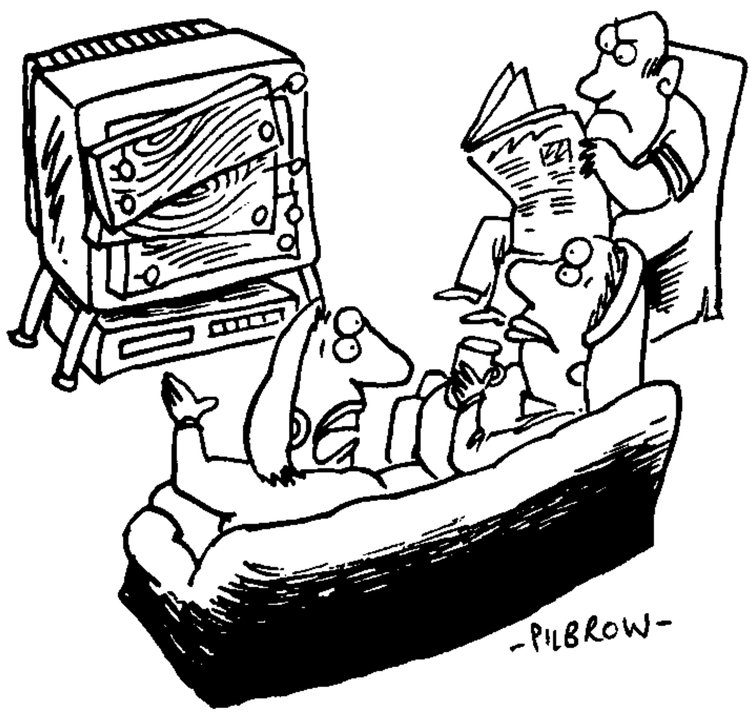
On Channel 4's *Flat-Mates*, the residents of a house debate and vote on which of five challengers will be admitted to the house, the prize a month's free rent there. But this is only a prelude to the same channel's *Big Brother* later this month, in which 10 people live for two months in a house isolated from the outside world but with cameras running in all the rooms for 24 hours. In this Anglicisation of a Dutch hit, viewers vote on who gets to stay in the house.

Square Eyes tries to be strict about not damning series without seeing them and we must allow that *Big Brother* may prove to be a model of good taste and anthropological significance. But the promises being made on the programme's web-site (Channel4.com/bigbrother) are ominous.

In the FAQ (Frequently Answered Questions) section of the site, potential viewers ask – from puritanism or prurience? – whether the contestants will be filmed on the toilet or in the shower. The web-master replies that, while tapes may be edited for transmission, those who live in the house will sign an agreement that they will be filmed at all times and in all activities.

Rather coyly, a further FAQ inquires whether there "are any activities which won't be filmed". In other words, sex. Again the web-master replies that the cameras will run in all the rooms all the time. And, while substantial editing will occur, "some cameras transmit 24/7 [all day, all week] on web-sites".

Unless Channel 4 is all flirt and no follow-through, then it seems from these promises that the company is getting ready to transmit scenes of live sex (however



"Albert got fed up with all the DIY programmes"

disguised) possibly on television and definitely on the internet. At the very least, the running camera rule means that Bazal (the production company behind *Big Brother*) will have stacks of tapes of 10 people showering, shitting and shagging.

While we await the ultimate in British TV voyeurism from *Big Brother*, *Flat-Mates* (also produced by Bazal) offers a preview of the cruelty of the elimination element which is the other essential part of these formats. Hosted by Emma Kennedy – an elfin, hyper-active presenter who wanted to be Zoe Ball and keeps shouting "wicked" and "smokin'" at the camera despite being white and middle-class – this format offers the five seekers of accommodation the rare (and not recommended) experience of hearing what people say about them when they are outside the room.

"She's the kind who'd have a pink bedroom full of teddies," bitches one of the residents as they narrow the contestants down from five to three. The three survivors are then asked to show one newly-bought item and one long-possessed item which they would bring to the "communal living area". The last two then race against time to construct a garden bench before, as in a televised presidential debate, making a 10-second closing pitch to the electorate. The proceedings are so rushed that it's impossible to keep hold of which one is which. At the end, the losing contestants are interviewed like England tennis hopefuls and pronounce themselves "gutted". It's won by the gay one but we have to be reminded that he's the gay one.

What kind of people would agree to be on these programmes? The answer was inadvertently given in *The Secret Life Of A Family*, a much-hyped BBC1 documentary in which an "ordinary family" agreed to have cameras - including microscopic and x-ray ones – in their home throughout an August day last year.

After advertisements in many journals and a casting trawl of the nation, the ordinary family selected was the household of Janine Duvitski, actress and co-star of *One Foot In The Grave*, whose hubby is also a thesp. It's rather reassuring that only actors were exhibitionist enough to turn their home into a goldfish bowl – although, because this is the serious BBC, there were no sex or defecation scenes here – but it makes you worry about the contestants (the cast, you want to say) in *Flat-Mates* and *Big Brother*. The only people who would possibly agree to appear are those desperate for a career, however short, in television.

'Square Eyes'

MEDIA NEWS

SO WHY are there so many correspondents at the BBC? Part of the answer is that a growing number of programme teams are turning their backs on the Beeb's unimpressive newsgathering section – formerly first port of call for news corrs – and appointing their own, often at great expense.

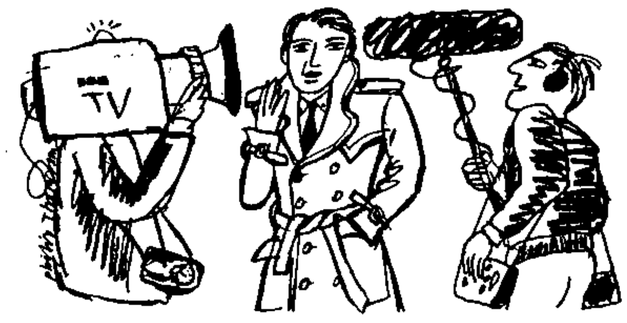
Newsgathering's fight to win back "customers" looks set to be a long and fruitless one, thanks in part to the management skills of Peter Mayne and Fran Unsworth – known to hacks as "Laurel and Hardy".

It was Mayne who vetoed plans to give radio correspondents ISDN lines at home so they could file in the small hours of the morning without driving into Broadcasting House. He also voted against the installation of new computers. And when radio and telly were disastrously "amalgamated" by Birt, it was Mayne who decided to sack all the radio reporters, leaving their telly chums protected. His attitude to criticism at this time earned him the nickname "F.I.F.O. man", thanks to his cheery motto: "Fit in or fuck off." Now he's spearheading Newsgathering's internet revolution.

Unsworth, too, has been telling hacks complaining about increased workload to "put up with it". She is now asking news corrs to sign a pledge saying they will always be able to get to their desks within an hour if they are needed – a less likely scenario now that many of them have been by-passed.

To quote one correspondent overheard in the Beeb's news centre: "That's another fine mess they've gotten us into."

GOING LIVE



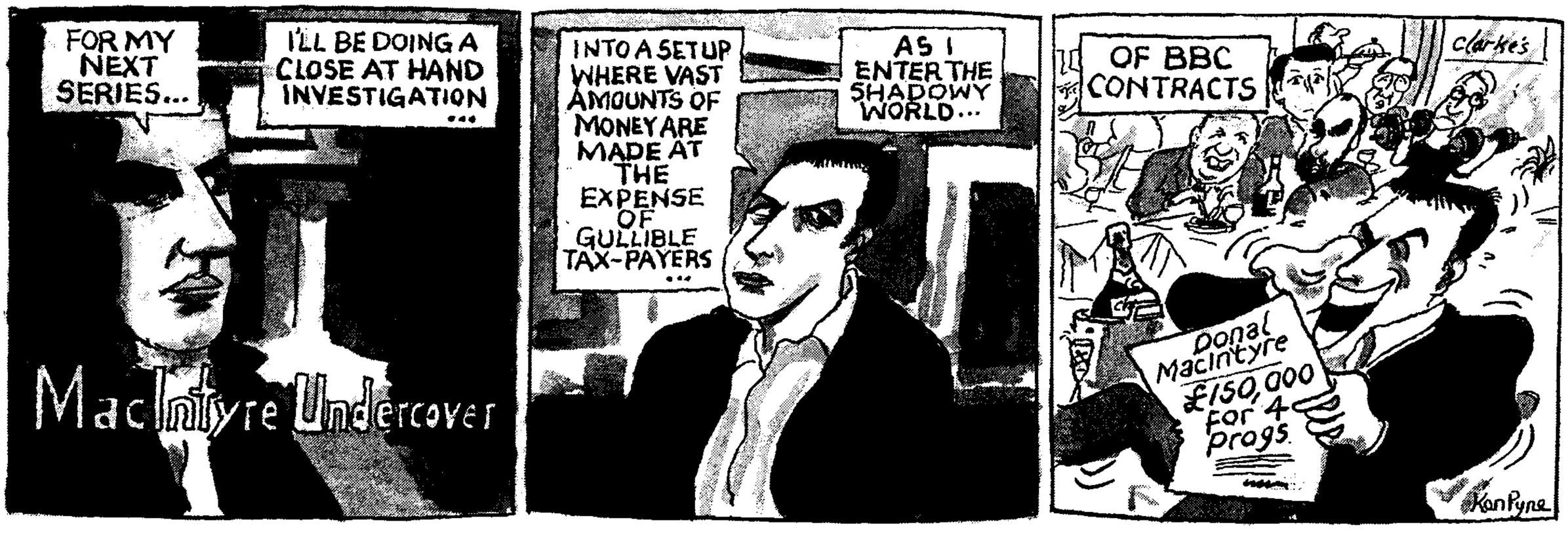
BBC 6 O'Clock News, 6 July: Robin Oakley reports live from Downing Street on the Euan Blair story.

Euan has been found drunk and incapable in Leicester Square, way up the road, reveals the political editor hours after everybody else. Downing Street is deserted, Euan is sleeping it off and everybody else has gone home to get drunk.

NINE members of the staff of an Indian TV station owned by Rupert Murdoch's Star TV satellite service are facing charges of obscenity and indecency following the broadcast of a game show, *V Dares You*, in which two teenaged girls were dared to strip to their underwear on a crowded street in Bombay, reports the Associated Press.

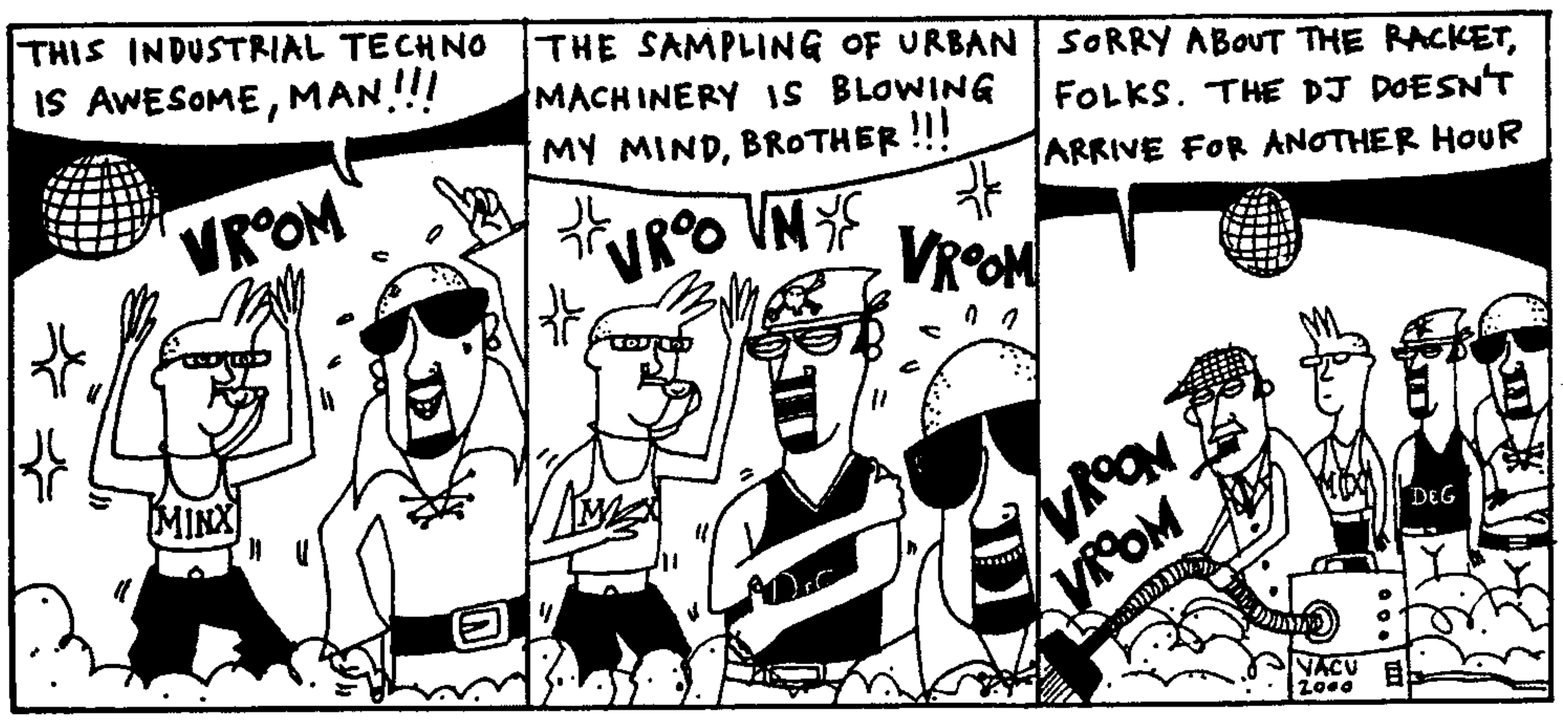
"The police action was prompted by public complaints and represents the first case of indecency against a satellite channel in India," says AP.

All this must be desperately upsetting for "Born Again" Rupert, who has shown such a great interest in the wellbeing of Asian women in the past.


FOR MY NEXT SERIES...
I'LL BE DOING A CLOSE AT HAND INVESTIGATION ...
MacIntyre Undercover
INTO A SETUP WHERE VAST AMOUNTS OF MONEY ARE MADE AT THE EXPENSE OF GULLIBLE TAX-PAYERS ...
AS I ENTER THE SHADOWY WORLD...
OF BBC CONTRACTS
Clarke's
Donal MacIntyre £150,000 for 4 Progs
Kan Pyne

IT'S GRIM UP NORTH LONDON

KNIFE & PACKER



WHAT HAS become of Donal MacIntyre's long-awaited investigation into City insider-dealing, which was to have been the fifth and final episode in his *MacIntyre Undercover* series last year?

The programme was due to be shown on 7 December 1999, and was listed in *Radio Times*; but it never went out. Instead, the BBC showed a compilation of highlights from the previous four programmes.

One viewer who complained at the time was sent the following explanation by Lucia Fortucci of BBC Information: "I can assure you that it will be shown at a later date, but exactly when has not been fixed. The decision was purely an editorial one and was based upon a great demand for updates from the editions shown so far. This demand could not have been anticipated at the time the *Radio Times* went to press."

A likely story. If the public's appetite for MacIntyre investigations was so huge, why not go ahead with the insider-dealing *exposé* and then put out a compilation a week or two later?

After sending another letter last month, the viewer had this reply from the BBC: "There has still to be a date confirmed for this edition... I hope that you will bear with us." The truth is that the final programme was pulled because of serious legal problems.

Meanwhile, it seems that MacIntyre himself is going to "bear with" the BBC after all. Earlier this year he asked for a fee of £300,000 for his next four-part series. When the Corporation rejected this extravagant demand, a "close friend" of MacIntyre planted a story in the *Mirror* claiming that he had "received several rival offers, including one from an American TV network", and warning that the loss of this "very talented journalist" would be a disaster for the BBC.

But the BBC called his bluff, suspecting that the "rival offers" were figments of someone's imagination. And, sure enough, MacIntyre has now agreed to settle for the Corporation's original offer of £150,000 – exactly half what he'd demanded.

10.00 CELEBRITY HEARTBREAK (T) Stars and public figures talk to chat show queen Trisha Goddard about their broken romances, revealing how the pain is often made worse by the pressure of being under constant media scrutiny. *The Sun*

CRIME expert Lord Birt may have turned down the offer of a job with his old friends McKinsey in the wake of outraged press reports asking how he could justify receiving a salary from a company to which he gave so much business while at the Beeb, but in White City the influence of the management consultants lives on.

Caroline Fairburn, a *birtista* who has survived under the Dyke regime, is the author of a new BBC strategy entitled "back to basics" (see *Eye* 1004), which aims to work with "outside organisations" and "external partners".

BBC staff wondering how Ms Fairburn dreamt up such an original phrase to describe what many suspect is the first step towards commercialisation of the Beeb, need look no further than her time as a McKinsey consultant. She was seconded to the old Number 10 policy unit during John Major's last term in office... precisely the time when the Tories launched their own ill-fated "back to basics" campaign.

WHEN news of the shooting of two UN staff in Baghdad first reached BBC news editors on 28 June it was immediately placed in the top three stories in the news priority list, as might be expected.

But when the wires revealed that the gunman was protesting against Western sanctions in Iraq the story all but disappeared from view.

The regional press, too, thought it a big story. The *Birmingham Post* gave it 42 lines and the *Eastern Daily Press* 25. The *Irish Times* lavished 99 lines on its report. But the London-based press was quick to lose interest: nine lines in the *Grauniad*, 25 in the *Independent* and four in the *Mirror;* that was it.

Signs of a London-based spin campaign against anti-sanction protests? Surely not.

DUMB BRITAIN

More answers to £1,000 questions from phone contestants on ITV's daytime magazine show *This Morning*, mostly presented by Richard and Judy.

Q: *Which Danish city is famous for its statue of a mermaid?*
A: Denmark.
Q: *How many metres are there in a kilometre?*
A: Three.
Q: *How many wheels on a unicycle?*
A: Three.
Q: *In what year did the Second World War end?*
A: 1918.
Try again. . .
Er... 1937.
Q: *What is origami?*
A: A herb.

● ***"Are you a woman over 50? Do you use a vibrator? Has it made a difference to your life? If so a TV researcher would like to talk to you."*** – Ad in the classified section of *The Big Issue,* revealing another barrel-scraping exercise in the decline of TV current affairs.

THE SPIRIT of love, peace and happiness sadly failed to enter some of the BBC big-wigs who went along to this year's Glastonbury festival for the ride.

When BBC1 controller Peter Salmon spied a Beeb catering van dispensing food to a crew who had just finished filming a lengthy set he naturally went straight to the front of the queue. For some reason this annoyed a technician, who marched up to him and demanded to know why he was setting such a bad example to his staff, forcing him to withdraw with a thunderous look on his face.

The techies had a bad time of it all round. When ex-Clash band-member Joe Strummer came off stage, he effed and blinded at the BBC crew filming his performance and almost injured one of the cameramen by shoving a mike-stand towards him. The crew were so outraged they tracked Strummer down to remonstrate with him, only to find him sharing a cold beer with Alan Yentob, who had commandeered a BBC hospitality tent to schmooze his old punk heroes.

Pseuds Corner

The ironic mode becomes a sort of Private Eye/Have I Got News For You meta-attitude...

ROBERT McCRUM
The Guardian

So if you manage to get a quiet moment to yourself today, stop for a second and listen. The noise you hear is the sound of progress. It's the sound of a Government working hard to give our older people a voice.

JEFF ROOKER MP
(reporting on the 'Life Begins at 50' campaign's 1999 'Listening Events')

As he [shoe designer Manolo Blahnik] draws he talks, conjuring up the spirit of the woman who will wear such a shoe. "She's from Dar es Salaam," he explains, almost crooning as he works. "And she's come to see her sister in Paris. They've been to Maggie Rouff to buy a spotted linen suit and now they're just taking home some calla lilies..." In this way, he creates a personality for each shoe even at the drawing stage.

Sunday Times Style Section

Baggio is a magician, his almost preternatural vision supported by an astonishing array of ballistic acrobatics that produce positively hallucinogenic effects, not to mention scoring two goals that can only be described as brushstrokes on the Sistine Chapel.

JOE McGINISS
Observer

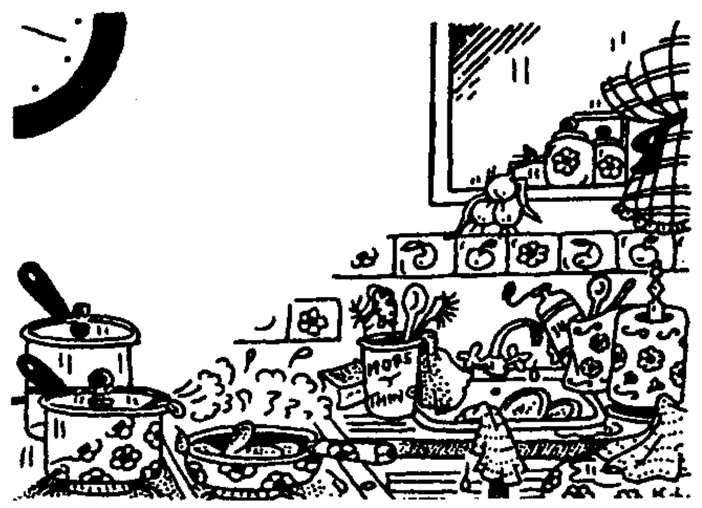
[Peter] Gabriel has been spending more time with his parents — holidays together and the like. Father and son took a week's break at a Devon hotel recently. "Just he and I and a yoga teacher. Fantastic! We really broke through some stuff." A song resulted, and will be included on the album.

Times Magazine

So it was horribly vulgar and predictable for me to fall for Will [Self], like saying your favourite film is Casablanca or your favourite Opal Fruit is strawberry. For years, I just looked at him across crowded rooms — you couldn't miss him; he was so tall and prehistoric-looking — until one night he followed my husband and I home, and showed us how to smoke crack. I'll never forget what a thrill it was being bossed about by him — now cut a hole in the Evian bottle, now stick the straw in there; like some depraved Blue Peter presenter — and I'll never forget how he looked when it hit him: slumped on my black leather sofa, with just one big juicy tear coursing down his left cheekbone. I was lost.

JULIE BURCHILL
Guardian

Each thing I design is really for me. That way, I get everything right. I don't have hobbies. work is my passion. And because I made the house, home is



work. It's stressful. Catherine buys horrible things to upset me, She buys kitchen roll with a pattern. She calls me the queen on the pincushion because I get all flapped up about things like J-cloths. I can't stand them.

JOHN PAWSON
Sunday Times Magazine

CONTRIBUTORS: Umberto Echo, 'Miggi', John Pitcher, George Whitelock, Jackie Boorn, C. Hobbs, Julie Blaxland.

£10 paid for entries

Letters

Man with beard writes

Sir,

As an avid Eye reader, I always have a healthy degree of scepticism towards stories in your organ, however, I don't expect them to be works of fiction! For the record, may I state that the Lottery Commission's delay in granting the new licence (Eye 1005) has absolutely nothing to do with either your organ or Tom Bower, and the commission have not asked me or anyone else for a copy of his defence.

As for Will Whitehorn's "spinning" about Stephen Murphy going part time, the FT did an interview with me about his new role weeks before the Guardian story appeared, and for reasons best known to themselves, chose not to run it. The rest of the article is also "fantastical" in its assumptions, for example, Forbes magazine told us months ago that they planned to do a cover story (not the other way round). Finally, Virgin.com/cars are "bloody good" value for money for the 99.99% who are not Telegraph journalists living in Slough.

Yours faithfully,
RICHARD BRANSON,

London W11.

Lookalike

Branson

Wise Man

Sir,

Could this be Richard Branson featured as a gift-bearing wise man on La Sagrada Familia, Barcelona?

CLAIRE HENLEY & SIMON GROGAN,

Address unknown.

LotterEye

Sir,

Your piece about the National Lottery (Eye 1005) said that we asked for a copy of the "statement of defence" submitted by Tom Bower, who is writing a biography of, and being sued by, Sir Richard Branson. We did not.

For accurate details of both consortia your readers could reference our website: www.natlotcomm.gov.uk

Yours sincerely,
MARK HARRIS,

Chief Executive, National Lottery Commission, SW1 2BQ.

Cherie Who?

Sir,

I read with dismay your latest article about the Sheep Dip and Gulf War litigation (Down on the Farm, Eye 1005. You have repeated allegations made by the Countess of Mar under cover of parliamentary privilege in the recent debate in the House of Lords. I am prevented by well-known professional rules relating to client confidentiality and ongoing litigation from laying out the facts which would refute these allegations at the present time. However I can say:

I do not and never have had a photograph of Cherie Booth on my desk.

The Legal Aid Board approved the arrangements for my firm to run these cases in June and November 1999 after careful scrutiny of our plans and resources. The Lord Chancellor confirmed in the debate in the House of Lords that "Patrick Allen of that firm was able in a short period to assemble an impressive team of eight solicitors and scientific and support staff, including Mark Mildred, one of the most experienced multi-party solicitors in the country."

Lord Chancellor went on to say "there is no evidence of any general client dissatisfaction with the handling of the claims either by Hodge Jones & Allen or by the Legal Aid Board".

Our guiding principle at Hodge Jones Allen is to ensure that public money made available by the Legal Aid Board on these cases is wisely and properly spent. Firm budgetary controls were put in place by me when I took over these cases and all expenditure and strategy on these cases has been approved by the Legal Aid Board.

Yours sincerely,
PATRICK ALLEN,

Hodge Jones & Allen Solicitors, London NW1.

Hackney and Islington loose their best students at 16, say Inspectors

OFSTED's web page

The other Tony and Gordon

Sir,

Were you the little erk in 5B who liked to grass everyone up? Trouble was, you were short sighted, weren't you? And always mixed up the identities of your victims, just as you did in your article (Eye 1005).

UKIP as the fourth largest party has the fourth largest portion of Bennetts. I defended Derek Bennett (NEC member) not Tony Bennett from Eastern Region who I prefer to attack. Tony must defend himself from Roman Catholics and me, but Gordon Bennett, please get it right!

It appears thousands of criminals were marching for "Independence from the EU" with UKIP members but you failed to spot the members of the other major parties also happily marching along and not knowing that it was really a "Consort with a Convict Crusade" organised by Lord Longford.

At Aston Villa I may well be in the same crowd as members of the Mothers Union or the Birmingham Nose Pickers but I do not qualify as a member nor would I wish to join.

Do you still consort with Maisy Mees of 4A, that spotty little swat with the droopy drawers?

Yours sincerely,
MIKE NATTRASS,

Party Chairman UKIP.

Is there Muchmore of this?

Sir,

So it's true, you do make it all up! As a teacher I don't have the time to read newspapers (they're too big and expensive - and there is always another DfEE diktat to study). However, I always find time for the Eye during visits to the lavatory, so I read your Hackwatch piece on Fleet Street soap operas with interest.

I felt my intelligence was being insulted as you tried to fool me into thinking that characters called India, Giles, Jeremy and Tiffany got paid for writing rubbish about their washing machines, servant problems, hypochondria and unpleasant children.

Surely, this cannot be true? Surely newspapers who have been so critical of teachers and support systems of inspection, league tables, performance management, pay restraint for teachers, school closures and naming and shaming would print these self-obsessed whimperings? If these people really existed, my guess is that they would probably be paid per column the equivalent of a teacher's annual pay rise.

Say it isn't true, please.

Yours worriedly,
D. MUCHMORE,

Via e-mail.

Talent scout

Sir,

While I am grateful to Graham Redwood for drawing attention to Andrew Neill's expertise in the field of talent management (Letters, Eye 1005), I cannot help feeling that the photographic assistance which you gave him was altogether insufficient, and did not demonstrate fully Mr Neill's commitment to his subject.

I hope the attached goes some way to show Mr Neill's true stature as a researcher.

Yours sincerely,
JAMIE LEADER,

Via e-mail.

Lock here

Sir,

Good theory in "Wyres Crossed" (Eye 1005); shame the facts don't fit.

There never was a "threatened closure of Kidderminster Hospital". After the changes take effect, 90% of the patients presently treated at Kidderminster will continue to be treated there. Keeping services for 90% doesn't quite add up to closure in anyone's language.

I parted company with the hospital campaign group back in mid-1998, not when appointed a Minister, because they refused to accept a sensible, balanced report by the Kings Fund which supported limited change at the hospital and because they issued hopeless judicial review proceedings against the Health Authority. The judicial review, as predicted, failed and cost local people £50,000 in wasted legal fees.

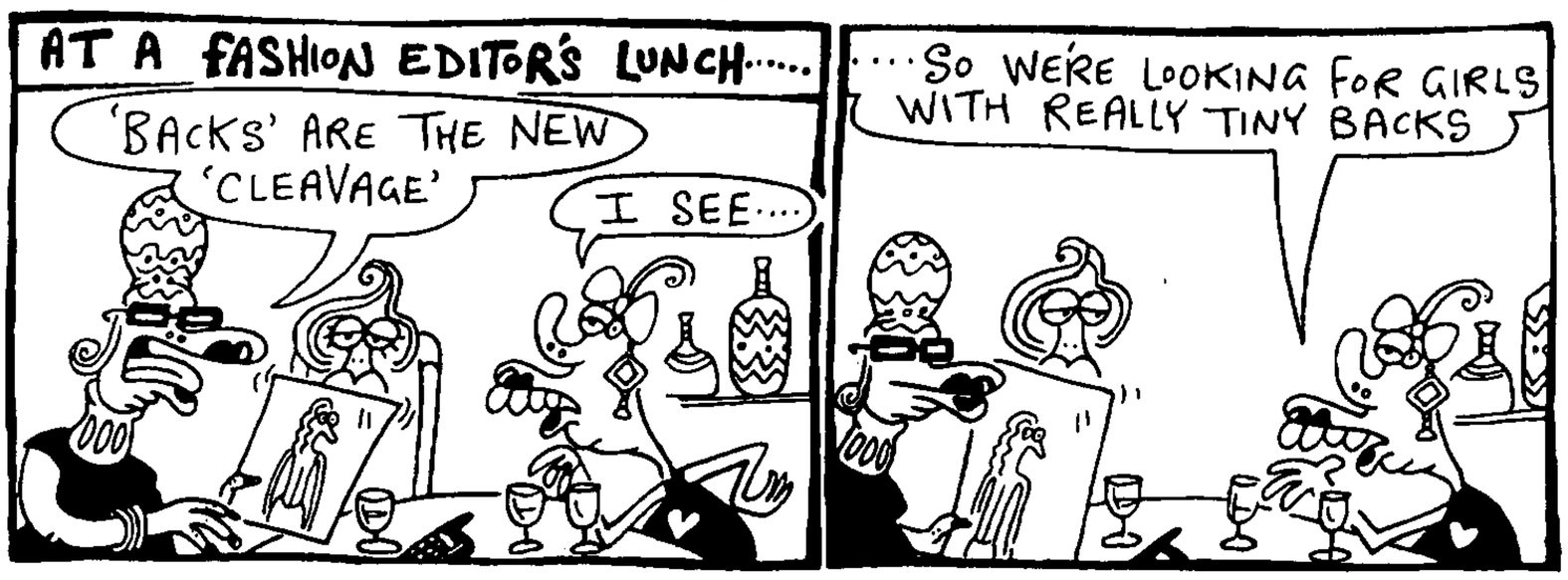
For the past three years I've carried on working to support the hospital. This week we've secured a renal unit for Kidderminster and treatment for heart attack victims. Not quite the picture you suggested.

Professor Pollock didn't bother to check her facts with the Health Authority before going into print. The Health Authority put out a detailed statement debunking the claims in her report, including the small matter that she missed 600 beds in her count. I enclose a copy.

I hope this untangles the Wyres. I still remain a regular reader.

DAVID LOCK MP,

House of Commons, SW1.



Dung roamin'

Sir,

Re: "Shitter" sign post. I enclose a photograph of an unadulterated village sign in Dorset. Shitterton is a small village to the west of Bere Regis on the old Poole to Dorchester Road. It is pronounced in three different ways, according to whom you are speaking:

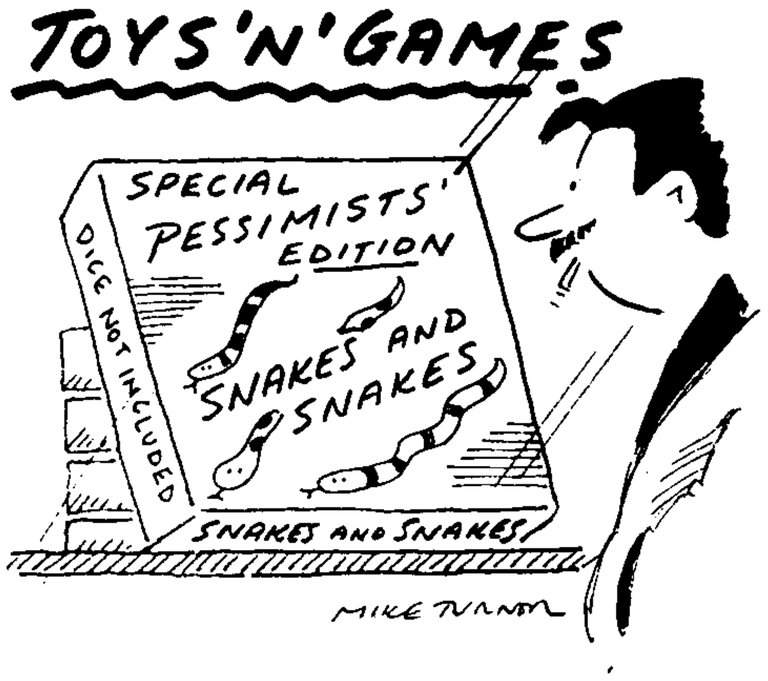
Original village inhabitants — "Shitterton"

"Townies" recently moved in – "Shite-erton"

The Local Authority who find the name rather embarrassing – "Sitterton".

Yours faithfully,
PETER DAVIS,

New Milton, Hants.



Wrong diagnosis

Sir,

MD has his facts wrong (Eye 1005). I did not say that Professor Ian Cameron's report concerning Hammersmith Hospital was inconclusive. I have not seen the report and do not know its contents.

The point I was making was that there is very little guidance on how NHS organisations should conduct inquiries. One of CHI's tasks is to produce guidance for the NHS on running effective inquiries which are conclusive, something MD would surely be in favour of.

Yours faithfully,
DAME DEIRDRE HINE,

Chairman, Commission for Health Improvement.

Surely some mistake

Sir,

I read with interest in Eye 1005 the latest news of possible links with the UKIP and the fascist BNP. However, Eye readers, and indeed UKIP supporters, may be interested to know that in the Tottenham by-election, the UKIP stood a personable Asian chemist from South London whose main campaigning points were support for asylum seekers and attacks on Jack Straw for curtailing the right to trial by jury. Perhaps we could now be told whether this is official UKIP policy all over Britain, or just in Tottenham.

Yours,
KEITH FLETT,

London N17.

No sense of humous

Sir,

"It's Grim Up North London" is superb, but why would anyone want both "goat cheese dip" and "vegan humous"? Think about it...

*In any case, given that it comprises chick peas, tahini, lemon juice and garlic, Jez and Quin would be hard-pressed to find any humous that is **not** vegan.*

Yours faithfully,
HOWARD S. GOODMAN,

London N10.

Smart arse

Sir,

Well done for spotting that John Birt's pay increase, from £130,000 in 86/87 to £1,300,000 in 99/00, represents a 1000% rise in five years (Eye 1005). Some of us might have calculated it to be only 900% over 13 years.

Regards,
ALAN SAUL

Via e-mail.

Chain mail

Sir,

Piloti's paean of praise for the old Hungerford Bridge (Eye 1005) and its massive chains omits one intriguing detail. Those chains survive. After the bridge was dismantled they were re-used for the Clifton suspension bridge in Bristol where they are still working admirably.

I wonder if any of Lord Wobbler's achievements will still be with us in the middle of the 22nd century?

Yours faithfully,
RODNEY BENNETT,

Richmond, Surrey.

Colemanballs

£10 paid for contributions

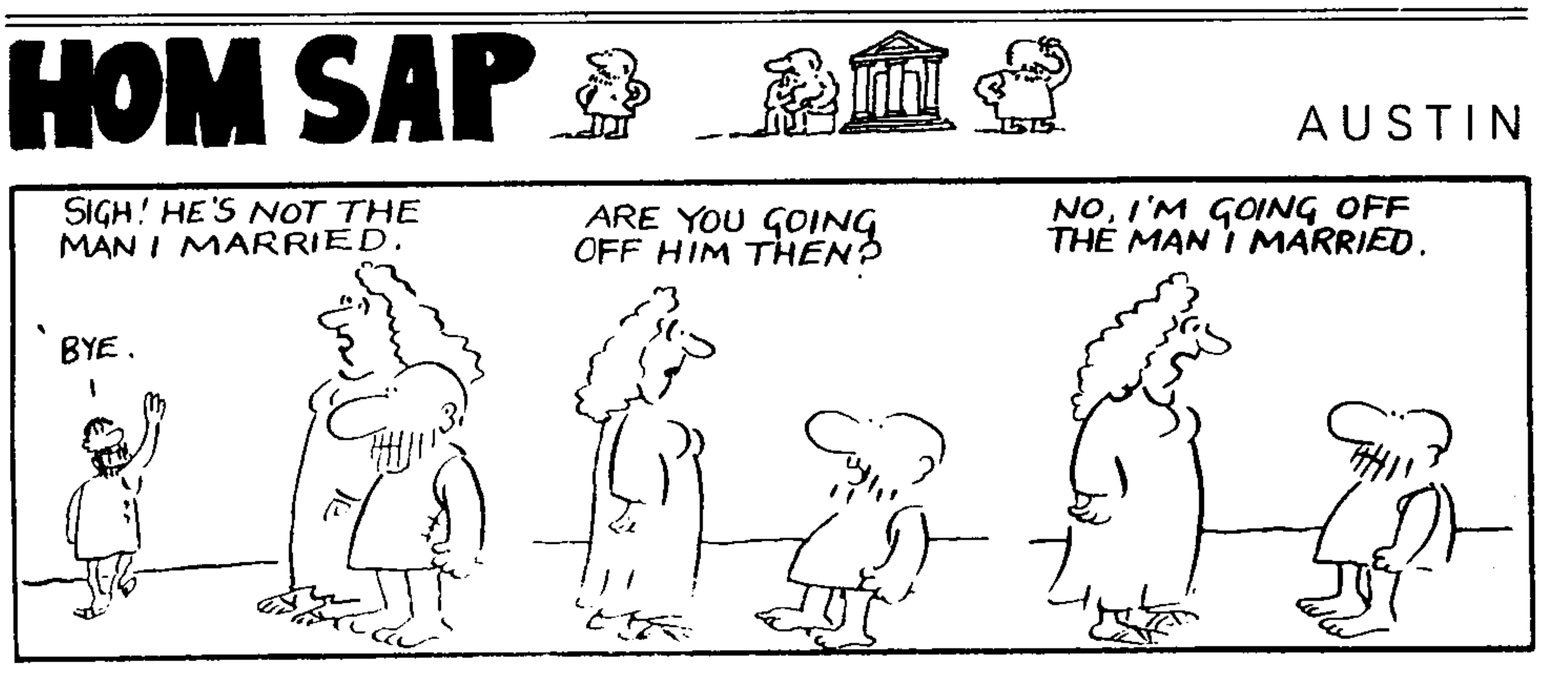
Henry Blofeld: *Mrs Shepherd has made us some lovely Welsh cakes. What are they called, Don?*
Don Shepherd: *Welsh cakes, Henry.*
Radio 4
(David Podmore)

"He was a great tennis player, rather like a chess player, always trying to thread the ball through the eye of a needle."
Presenter, Talk Sport
(R. Stubbington)

"Now's the time for those deaf ears to become unplugged; so they don't sleepwalk..."
TONY BANKS, BBC1
(Nick Brackenbury)

"One accusation you can't throw at me is that I've always done my best."
ALAN SHEARER, BBC1
(William Font)

"When the Deutschmark was at its peak the Germans went out and sold more Mercedes-Benz than any other car maker in the world."
LORD HANSON, Radio 4
(Alun Morris)



"If you can't stand the cold, get out of the kitchen"

Letter From **Freetown**
by Our Own Correspondent

JOHN PRESCOTT showed his usual attention to detail during a recent 24-hour visit to Sierra Leone, as he stressed Britain's commitment to "finding a solution to the problems facing East Africa". Could his civil servants not have given the poor fellow a map?

Warming to his theme, the deputy PM declared: "We are not leaving. We are moving into the second phase which is to help rebuild and protect democracy in Sierra Leone" – this as he met the last contingent of Royal Marines on their way home to Britain.

The people of Sierra Leone may have hoped that the arrival of British and UN forces would spare them from future depredations by the homicidal Revolutionary United Front. Instead, the RUF have done what was widely expected – wait until most British forces had left, allow more confusion to spread through the deeply divided UN mission in the country, and then renew their offensive. Even towns like Masiaka, only 30 miles from the capital Freetown and safe just three weeks ago, are now under rebel attack.

The British plan to "rebuild and protect democracy in Sierra Leone" is based on training teams which were meant to put together a new, professional Sierra Leone Army within six weeks: it would then sweep away the RUF and reclaim the diamond mines.

But this is highly fanciful. The new SLA is being created from a disparate and exotic circus of groups who were at each other's throats not so long ago. They include Chief Hinga Norman's Kamajor militia who believe that the glass beads around their necks will turn enemy bullets into water; the old SLA, many of whose members previously fled into the bush to join the rebels; and Johnny Paul Koroma's Armed Forces Revolutionary Council, another former rebel group, which has carried out more murders and mutilations than the RUF. Freetown is rife with rumours of coups and speculation about who will succeed the country's feeble president, Ahmed Tejan Kabbah.

Rather surprisingly, Robin "Ethics Man" Cook seems to have developed a *tendresse* for Johnny Paul Koroma. During his own visit to Sierra Leone, a few days before Prescott, he spoke glowingly of the old mass-murderer. When a few of Cook's officials expressed unease about Koroma's past, the foreign secretary reassured them that Johnny Paul was now a changed man because he has found God.

This is not, of course, the first time that Whitehall has miscalculated on the gangsters who run the rebel movements. Foday Sankho, the RUF leader, was in prison for his numerous atrocities until the British and American governments engineered his release and got him the post of vice-president – with, astonishingly, the minerals portfolio. He thus acquired full control of the diamond mines, which still remain in RUF hands.

Sankho was subsequently the recipient of much British buttering-up, including the gift of an air-conditioned Land Rover after he complained about the one he already had. But none of this prevented him from organising the latest RUF offensive which led to his eventual arrest.

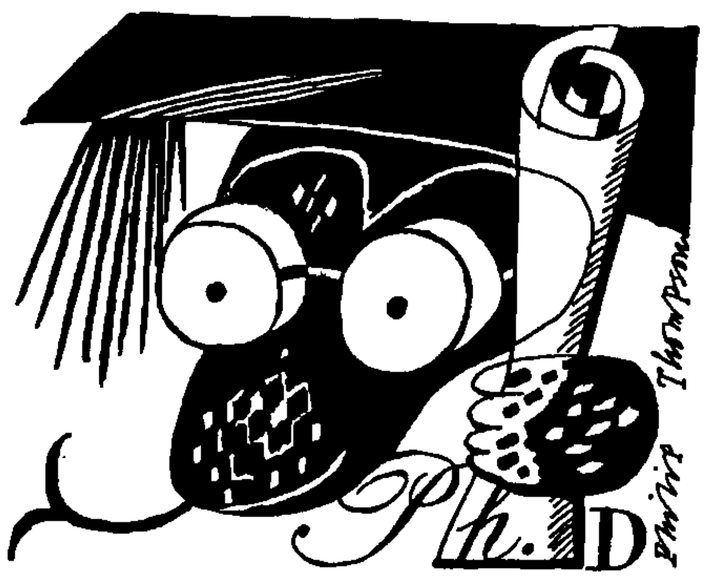
When the British training team pulls out, the Sierra Leone government will have to depend on other foreign forces to survive. Since it now seems likely that the UN, too, will pull out at the first opportunity, this will leave the way open for the West African ECOWAS countries, led by the Nigerians, to divide up the diamond spoils. President Charles Taylor of Liberia, at present the main beneficiary of Sierra Leone's looted diamonds, is apparently willing to share them out a bit more.

No wonder most people in Freetown believe that John Prescott's talk of rebuilding democracy in Sierra Leone is about as reliable as his knowledge of African geography.

FUNNY OLD WORLD

COMPILED BY VICTOR LEWIS-SMITH

"The idea isn't to shock," performance artist Erik Sprague told lecturers at the State University of New York during his enrolment as a doctoral candidate in philosophy. "The idea is to stimulate dialogue, to get people thinking, to make people wonder. My plan is to slowly transform myself into a reptile, over the course of the next three years. I have already had my body tattooed from head to foot in scales, and these will gradually be filled in with green ink. Surgeons have agreed to implant a bony ridge across my forehead, and as you can see, my fingernails are shaped into claws and



some of my teeth are filed. I'm also hanging small weights from the end of my tongue, to lengthen it. When everything else is completed, I will have a prosthetic tail fitted, and will then hand myself in for examination, as a work of reptilian art. The eyes may be a problem though. I have to wear maximum strength prescription lenses at all times."

Sprague was duly enrolled as a doctoral candidate. *(Chronicle of Higher Education, February 2000. Spotter: Wallace Brown)*

—●—

● "This whole story has been blown out of all proportion," said a spokeswoman for the Over and Sons garage in Aspatria. "It's true that last week a man walked onto our forecourt in the Market Place with a fox under his arm, pushed the nozzle of the compressed air line into the animal's rectum, put 20p in the slot, and pumped it until it exploded. But what the newspaper reports didn't mention was that the animal was already dead."

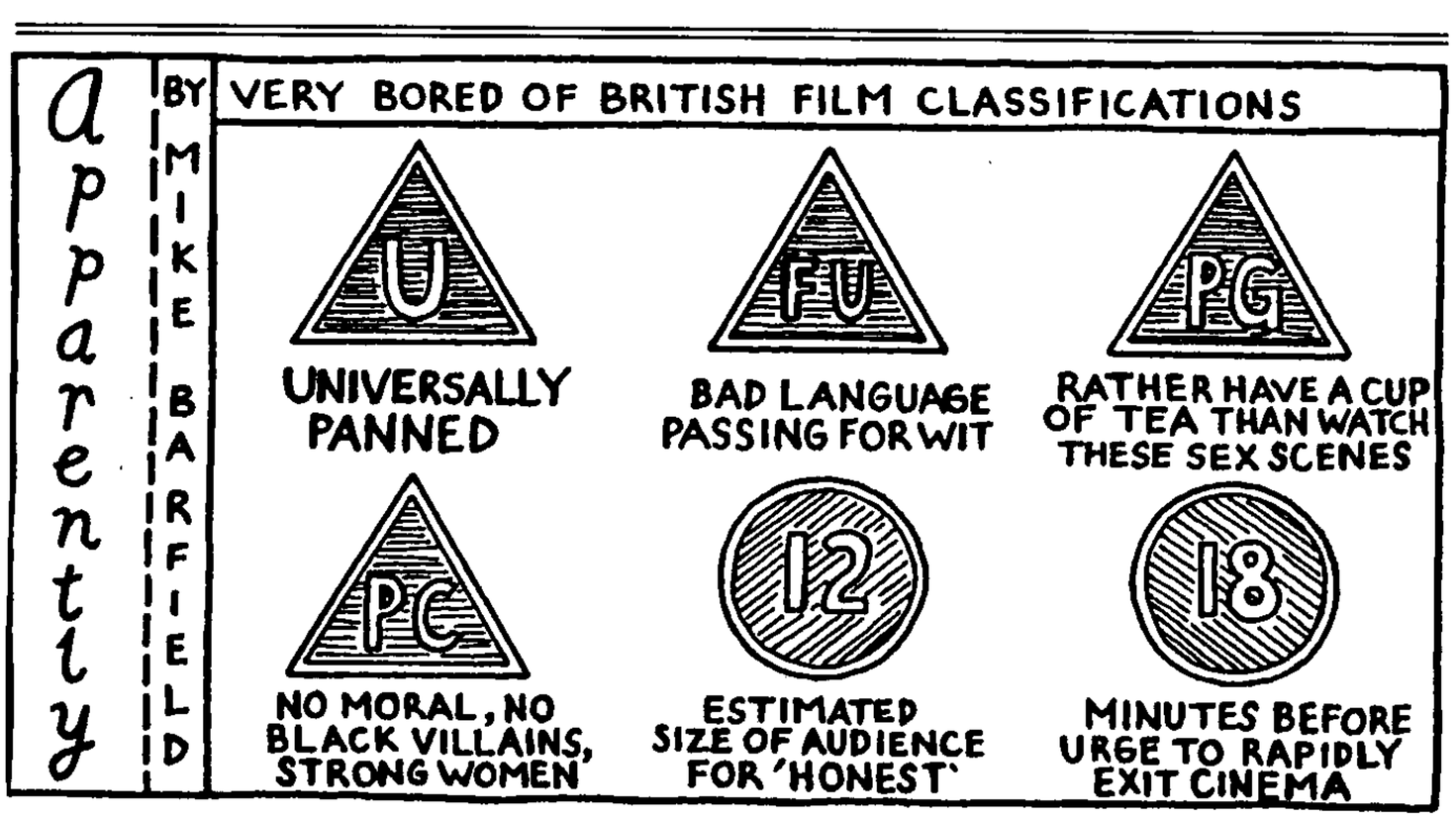
The spokeswoman explained that the garage had been under siege for several days following reports about the incident. "There were animal parts scattered all over the forecourt, and a lot of people were shocked and horrified. A report appeared in the local paper, talking about 'this sickening and horrible act,' and next day the nasty phone calls started. Animal rights activists even threatened to make reprisal attacks on the garage, and we had to call more staff in, because nobody would work here alone. But what had really happened was that an amateur taxidermist had brought the dead fox in, and asked if he could pump some air between the fur and the skin, to loosen the pelt. We said he could, but I think he overdid it a bit, then ran away in embarrassment. It ought to be obvious to anyone that the animal couldn't have been alive. I mean, it's hard enough to even hold a live fox, let alone insert an air-line up its rectum. I should imagine."

Police later confirmed that they had spoken to a man about the incident. "We are convinced that no criminal act has taken place, but we did warn him about the inadvisability of inflating animals in a public place." *(Times & Star [Cumbria], 23/6/00. Spotter: Wesley Stanton)*

—●—

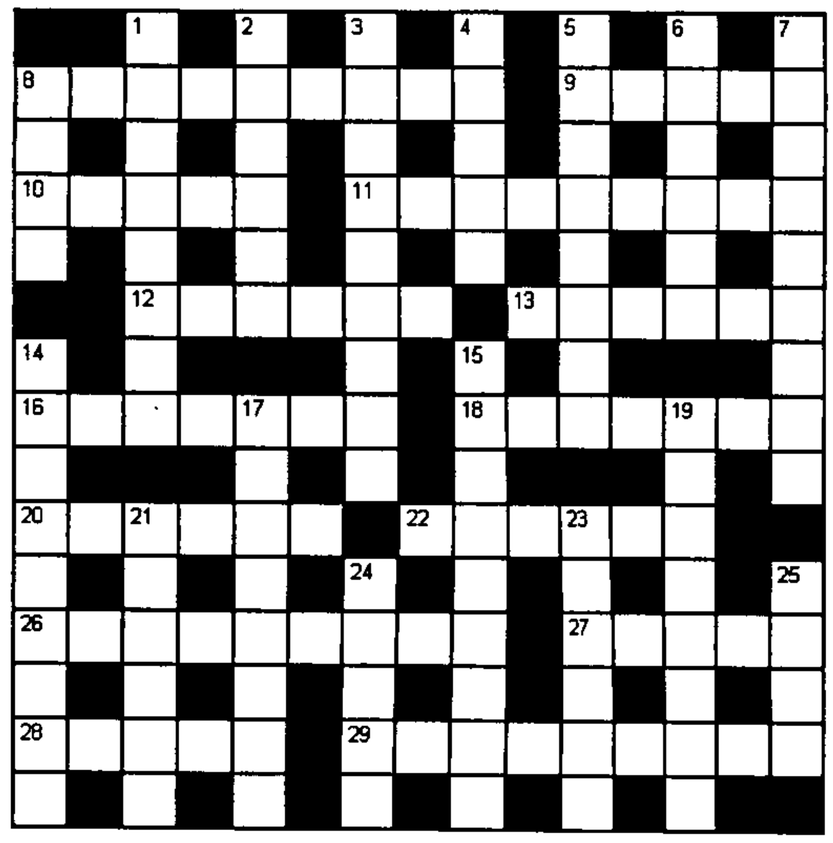
● *"I feel like a branded animal," Liana Gedz told a New York court, while giving evidence in her $5million legal action against Dr Allan Zarkin. "When I agreed to have my baby delivered by caesarian section, I had no idea that he was going to carve his initials into my abdomen during the operation. I now have three-inch-high letters 'A' and 'Z' carved permanently into my flesh, and I want compensation."*

Defending Dr Zarkin, lawyer Kenneth Platzer told the court "my client is a flamboyant character, and is known among hospital staff as 'Dr Zorro'. He admits to having 'signed' several previous patients, like an artist signing a canvas, but until now he has only carved his initials in very small letters. However, he felt very close to this woman, and something clicked on and off in his brain, and he decided to carve much larger letters. I shall later be presenting evidence that he suffers from a frontal lobe disorder." (The Boston Globe, 22/1/00. Spotter: John J. Donachie)



EYE CROSSWORD 161

by Cyclops *£100 prize*



ACROSS

8 React to being spanked by Jack perhaps with a natty bit of plastic (5,4)

9 Taxmen leave after V-sign (5)

10 Wicked pecker finally concealed by Clinton (5)

11 "One beer: ain't pissed" – piss-artist (9)

12/13 One with sexually ambivalent habits needs info. on getting date with Brenda on booze-up (6-6)

13 (see 12)

16 To pull a model, stretch (7)

18 He kept mum, having taken out his old man (7)

20+22 'Dabs' to inform on Prince to an audience (12)

22 (see 20)

26 Legal summonses uttered before House to allow backing for Al Fayed's accommodating sweetener (4,5)

27 Shout "Exercise!" and vault (5)

28 Pants and gets into just the right position, say? (5)

29 Cheek! Old TV battle-axe to check some northerners' English (9)

DOWN

1 Not coming clean with one's partner (6,2)

2 Dictator of smear about Labour's leader (6)

3 Show-ring policies declared by political party? (9)

4 What's the point in damn corrupt publicists? (5)

5 Lofty's balls sportingly given oral sex (8)

6 Brenda on foreign money commission (6)

7 Eye-centred sexual stimulation (9)

8 They go down regularly, newspaper staff! (4)

14 Henry, 12 inches to Ruth is not exactly a whopper (4-5)

15 Wolf-whistle type of figure but contained bits slip inexorably to the bottom! (4-5)

17 Madonna met hysterical grasping Stone (8)

19 A real pushover for women sexually, Tom (5-3)

21 One who gives head aggressively? (6)

23 Such impudent behaviour, our Ian getting snogged! (6)

24 Police beat up sadist and throw away key (5)

25 Yen's in shit — chronically (4)

£100 prize to first solution opened on 21.7.00. Entries to 'Crossword', Private Eye, 6 Carlisle Street, London W1V 5RG.

Solution to Crossword No. 160

Winner: C.M. STEELE

ACROSS: 1 Screw-up 5 Aseptic 10 Andrew 11 Apologia 12/22 Millennium Bridge 13 UFO 14 Mangy 15 Agincourt 18 Newsnight 20 Spice 23 Pea 24 Upper-class 25 Cobblers 26 Darwin 27 Quixote 28 Germany.

DOWN: 2 Candidate 3 Earplug 4 Unwind 6 Stormont 7 Profumo 8 Inigo 9 Taking the piss 16 Recession 17 Virulent 19 Soapbox 21 Pilgrim 22 (see 12) 23 Pro-EU.

Birt's Ten-Point Plan For Crime

1. **All criminals will be divided into four separate directorates: Crime Resources, Crime Management, Crime Development, and Crime Talent.**
2. **All criminals will be expected to operate within a two-tier internal market, comprising those buying in crime and those selling out.**
3. **There will be an increased emphasis on regional crime, plus a separate 24-hour rolling crime facility, which will supply digital crime across the board.**
4. **Night-time crime will be rescheduled to occur mid-morning, with special crime slots introduced throughout the day to** ***(That's enough Birt. Ed.)***

A Typical Crime Of The Type Lord Birt Will Not Investigate

A TOP executive working at a public corporation such as the BBC walks out of the building with a million pounds of licence-payers' money stuffed in the pocket of his designer suit – *in broad daylight*. Whilst occupying the building this man destroyed nearly everything of value inside it and gave away the jewels to a well-known fence, Mr R. Murdoch. What can be done?

BIRT SOLUTION: Reclassify this as a major achievement deserving a peerage.

Comedy Highlights **Summer Repeats**

The Ministry of Silly Marches

A CHANCE to see again the comedy classic that started in 1689 and that has been repeated every year since.

Warning: Contains scenes of sects and violence.

© Monty Python's Flying Bullets

Daily Mail

END THIS HIGHWAY ROBBERY

Every day thousands upon thousands of people are ripped off when they go to the petrol station. Yes, after filling up their tank, they then go into the shop and waste 35p on this newspaper.

35p! The actual news content of the Daily Mail is less than 2%, but **YOU** are charged for all the rest of the garbage they put in it to make up the weight.

Join the protest now!

CUT OUT AND DISPLAY IN YOUR CAR WINDOW

Exclusive Serialisation in the Sunday Times

THAT WAS THE SCISSORS AND PASTE THAT WAS

– a complete history of putting books together very quickly

by Humphrey Carpenter

Chapter One

IT ALL began in 1959 when Scissors and Paste met at Oxford and a new type of book was born.

Scissors was sharp and provided a cutting edge.

Paste was the glue that held it all together.

Between them they made an unbeatable team that was to take the cosy world of English publishing by storm.

Chapter Two

YET IT was not until Scissors and Paste met Humphrey Carpenter in an editorial office in Bloomsbury that the world finally came to recognise their amazing talents.

A book could now be written by copying a lot of bits out of other books and stringing them all together.

"It was incredibly exciting to be part of this new movement," says Carpenter, "even though nobody bought the books.

"You really felt you were doing something new and unoriginal," he says, "and you were."

NEXT WEEK: How the coming of the photocopier spelt an end to the Scissors and Paste boom.

Taken from "That Was The Scissors and Paste That Was" by Humphrey Carpenter.

OXFORD PRODIGY DISAPPEARS

by Our Academic Staff
D. Phil Space

THE 15-year-old child prodigy who recently finished his exams at Magdalen College, Oxford, has completely disappeared.

William Hague, described as "a political genius" at the age of eight was expected to go to the very top of his field and become Prime Minister but it is believed that the pressure of work became too much for him.

"William became depressed," said his tutor Mrs Margaret Thatcher of Somerville College, "and has gone into hiding. Nobody knows where he is but he has sent me an e-mail claiming to be leader of the Conservative Party."

Friends say Hague has chosen deliberate obscurity in a desire to avoid a life in the spotlight, and his disappearance has prompted questions about whether talented children as young as William should be allowed *(cont. p. 94)*

Film Highlights

The Patriot II: Final Solution

AS THE Second World War reaches its climax, American freedom fighter Mel Gibson discovers evidence that the English Government led by Winston Hitler is setting up concentration camps in New York to exterminate Afro-Americans and Native American Indians. As the English fascists then try to murder the entire world in cold blood US Forces under Gibson liberate the planet and defeat the British SS in the famous Battle of the Bilge *(That's enough drivel. Ed).*

ST ALBION PARISH NEWS

Incumbent: Rev. A.R.P. Blair MA (Oxon)

Reprinted In Full!

The Vicar's Sermon To Brighton's First Church Of Hot Gospellers

Praise the Lord!

Brothers and sisters, I thank you all for your support during what has been a terrible week. As the American poet Martin Luther Blackfellow put it so well, "Nobody knows the troubles I've seen." And it is at times like these that one looks forward to a really good holiday. And my thanks once again to Prince Fribi of Tuscany for lending me his Palazzo in Montepithonia.

(At this point, the Vicar appeared to be very tired and his thoughts began to ramble somewhat.)

I am sorry, brothers and sisters, I haven't been getting very much sleep lately due to my wife keeping awake at night shouting "It's your turn" z-z-z-z-z.

(At this point, the Vicar fell asleep before being woken by Mr Campbell.)

All of you who are parents know how difficult it is when someone you love goes off the rails, begins to rebel against authority and gets drunk. I'm thinking of course of Mo Mowlam here and our prayers go out to her at this difficult time.

(At this point, Mr Campbell took Mr Blair home for a lie-down. The Choir then sung the anthem "Every Vicar's Worst Nightmare", Words and Music T. Blair.)

The Editor Writes:

In response to recent criticism that my personality has become too dominant in parish life, I want to make it clear that from now on I propose to take a back seat, and to refrain from making any comments at all on individual members of the PCC. For example, I shall not be putting it about that Mrs Mowlam's unfortunate personality problems stem from her love of the bottle. Nor will I be telling the regulars at the Britannia Arms that Mr Brown should be seeking psychiatric help as a matter of urgency. Nor under any circumstances will you find me whispering in people's ears over a game of darts at the Working Men's Club that Mr Prescott is an overweight buffoon who dyes his hair and who can't even say the words "Good morning" in the right order. No, I understand the meaning of the word "loyalty", which is why, from now on, I will leave it to the Vicar to do his own dirty work!

Alastair Campbell
Editor

LETTER FROM TONY

Hullo!

Or, at least, hullo to all those of you who understand the meaning of the word "loyalty"!

And inevitably that's my theme this week, after such a spectacular display of ingratitude and betrayal by one of our parishioners.

As you know, Mr Follett (or "Ken" as Cherie and I used to call him) was once one of the most trusted members of our parish inner circle. "The Vicarage Kitchen Cabinet" you might call it.

Ken and his wife Barbara were always available to give a helping hand with our parish fund-raising initiatives – such as giving prizes for the white elephant stall at the fête, collecting envelopes for restoring Mr Cook's organ and throwing big parties for the Vicar.

And why not? Let's be frank about this. Ken has done pretty well for himself, dashing off his little books. And without being disloyal – I think we can leave that to him! – we can all agree that they are badly-written potboilers which scarcely deserve to fetch 10p on the second-hand bookstall at the parish jumble sale.

Still, Ken has made a pile of money out of his so-called literary activities, and here was a chance to give back to the community some of his ill-gotten gains!

It was a chance to make amends! After all, remember the young, rich man who asked Our Lord what he could do to be saved *(Gospel of St Lukre, 7.13)*? And the reply came, "Sell all that you have and give your money to Me."

Ken may have followed this advice for a while, but in the end the deadly sin of pride was too much for him.

Just because he was friends with the Vicar, he began to think he was someone really important in the life of the parish! He thought his *opinions* mattered, rather than his money!

To be honest, he became a bit of an embarrassment – which was why Cherie and I decided, for the good of the parish, that he and his equally embarrassing wife Barbara should no longer be invited to break *ciabatta* with us at our dinner parties!

I am sorry to say that, instead of just accepting that we didn't want to see him any more, or hear his silly views on parish business, or listen to his awful wife telling members of the PCC what colour ties to wear at evensong, Ken turned spiteful in a quite unforgiveable way.

The next thing we knew was that he was being quoted in the local paper, the St Albion Observer and Advertiser, attacking me for being "disloyal" and for being unpleasant about my colleagues behind their backs.

Perhaps it is time Ken was reminded of the most famous biblical story of all – the man who betrayed his leader after being a trusted disciple.

Ring any bells, Ken? I don't know whether there are any trees in your enormous garden, but Mr Campbell is sending you a suitable length of rope and I trust you'll know what to do with it!

Yours more in anger than in sorrow,

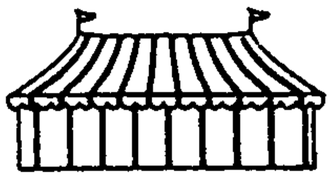
Tony

SOLE Team Leader of the Parish Project!

SALVE!

A warm welcome to my old friend John Birt who, even though he knows nothing about crime (apart from watching "The Bill"), has generously volunteered to give up a day a week to chair the Neighbourhood Watch Focus Group on 'Illegal Parking in Vicarage Crescent. Thanks John – St Albion's needs men of your calibre in the Fight Against Crime.

Millennium Tent update



by Jean-Claude Gerbil

Moi – je suis malade comme un parrot! Et no mistake! Le tent est un grand flop – mais ce n'est pas my fault! Oh non! Je will point le finger aux guilty men, quand le time comes – ie, when je suis sacked comme Madame Page, Monsieur et tous les autres.

Mais, voici un few noms pour going on with: Monsieur Falconer: quel idiot! Monsieur Mandelson: un autre grand idiot! Et le Monsieur Big, le plus grand idiot de tout – Monsieur Tony

(This update has been cut for reasons of space. Mr Gerbil is very tired and has been recommended for a large salary increase and a life peerage. Alastair Campbell, Editor.)

✝ To Remember In Your Prayers

...Mr Levy from the record shop in the High Street who is my special friend and advisor and who has been unfairly found out over his tax returns. Let his critics remember the words of our saver, "Render unto Caesar that which is Caesar's, unless it can be incorporated into the previous Tax Year! (Book of Levi the Profit, 3.15.)

✝ Not To Remember In Your Prayers

...Mr Follett. T.B.

??????????????? WHAT'S IN A NAME?

Have you ever noticed how people with the same name often share similar character traits?

For example, Bobby Moore and Bobby Charlton were both good footballers. Johann Bach and Johann Strauss both wrote nice tunes. And guess what! Ken Livingstone and Ken Follett are both treacherous, disloyal and deeply unpleasant human beings. Can you think of any others to add to the list?

???????????????

GLENDA SLAGG

Every Reader's Worst Nightmare!

SO, EUAN got drunk? So what!? He's sixteen, for cryin' out loud! Haven't we all been there, done that, and bought the puke-stained t-shirt!?! Geddit?!? I once spent four days lying in the gutter outside El Vinos – and that was last week!?!?!? So, leave him alone, Mr Pressman, he's only a normal kid doin' what every kid in Britain is doing every day!?!?! Cheers, Euan!!!! Have one for the road?!??! (Geddit?!?!)

EUAN BLAIR??? Doesn't he make you sick!?!?!? What a disgrace to his mum and dad – not to mention the whole country whom he has shamed by his yobbish drunkenness??!? Forget the on-the-spot fine, Tony, take your belt to him and knock some old-fashioned sense into the little hooligan before he starts World War Three?!?!

CHERIE BLAIR?! – Doesn't your heart go out to her??? Her father was a drunken swine – and now her son has turned out the same!?!?! Take a tip from Auntie Glenda, Cherie – pour yourself a large one and drink all your troubles away!?!?!

I BLAME Cherie Blair!!?!? A young vulnerable boy is found lying in the gutter in a seedy London Square. Who knows what danger lurks nearby?? And where is his mother!?!!? Sunning herself in swanky Portugal without a care in the world for her home-alone littl'un whose cry for help, "Mummy, Mummy, I want my Mummy," went unheard. You should be ashamed of yourself!?!?! *(So should you. Ed.)*

HATS OFF to Tony Blair who has faced a week of hell with dignity and composure!?!?! There isn't a parent in the land whose heart doesn't go out to him in his hour of trial and tribulation???! He has set an example to us all not by reaching for his belt and giving his son an ill-deserved hiding, but instead by offering mature calmness and saintly compassion for his prodigal son!?!God bless you, Tony, and I shall personally drink your health many times tonight in El Vinos!!!!?!

TONY BLAIR – call yourself a dad??!? Where were you the night Euan went out with his so-called mates??! I'll tell you,Tony – you were out a-winin' and a-dinin' with your so-called mate, Lord Levy. What sort of an example is that setting to the nation's youth??!?! I blame the parents! Why doesn't Mr Blair senior come up to town and take his belt to his errant son!?!?!

HERE THEY are, Glenda's Summer Bar-B-Cuties!

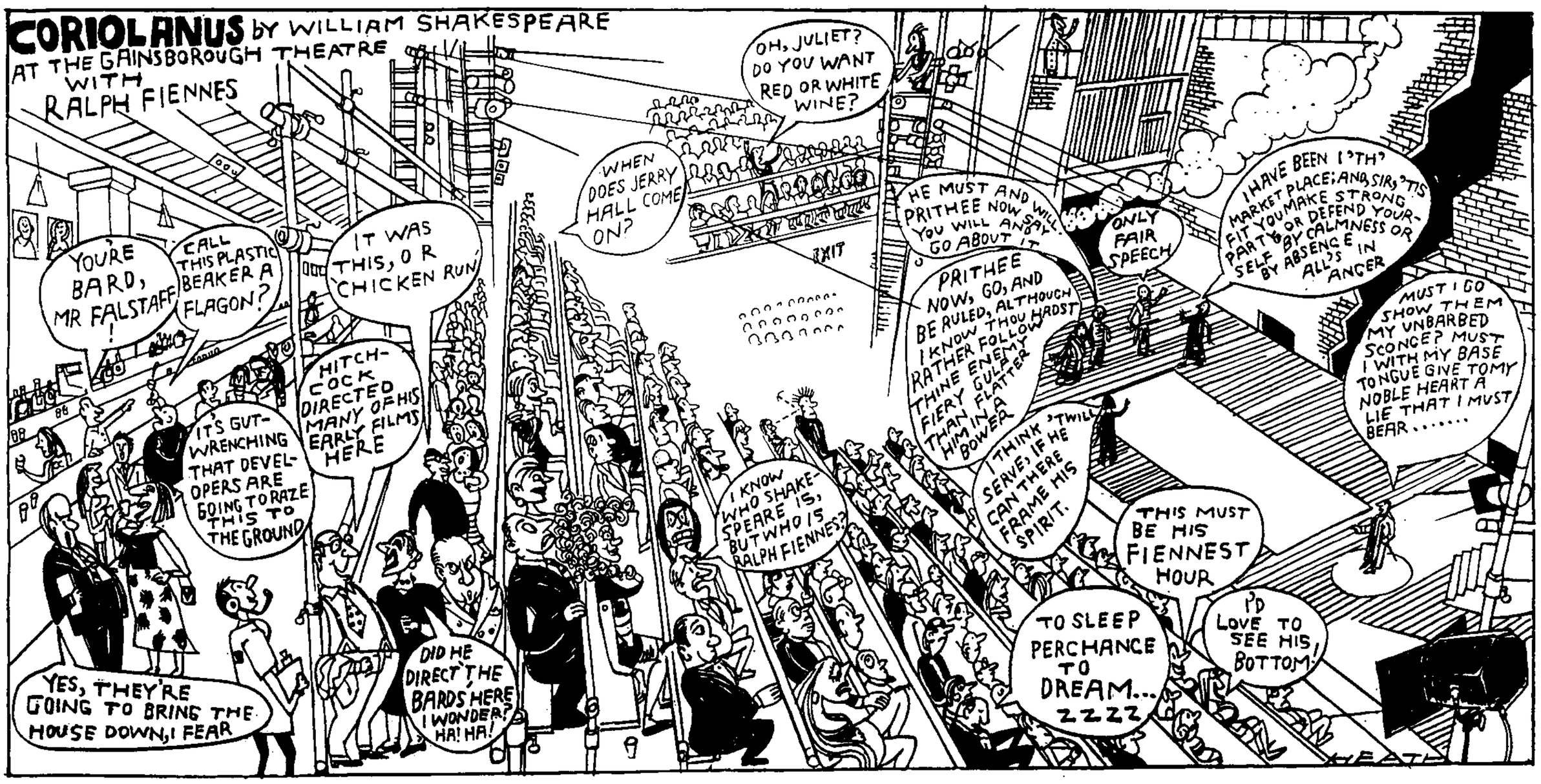
SIR PETER JAY – TV's Mr Economics! OK, so everyone's turning your programme off, but you're turning me on!! I bet your hat's the only thing that's floppy!?!?!

JAMIE OLIVER – So you're married!?!?! Who cares!?!?! That's the way I like them – Glenda's Recipe for Love is like Risotto – it takes 20 minutes!?!?! Mmmmm!?!?!?!?

PAT RAFTER – He may have lost the men's singles on the Centre Court, but he could be a winner at mixed doubles round at my place!!! Geddit?!?!?

Byeeeeeee!!?!???!

HEATH'S PRIVATE VIEW


CORIOLANUS by WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE
AT THE GAINSBOROUGH THEATRE
WITH
RALPH FIENNES
YOU'RE BARD, MR FALSTAFF!
CALL THIS PLASTIC BEAKER A FLAGON?
IT WAS THIS, OR 'CHICKEN RUN'
IT'S GUT-WRENCHING THAT DEVELOPERS ARE GOING TO RAZE THIS TO THE GROUND
HITCH-COCK DIRECTED MANY OF HIS EARLY FILMS HERE
YES, THEY'RE GOING TO BRING THE HOUSE DOWN, I FEAR
DID HE DIRECT 'THE BARDS HERE I WONDER? HA! HA!
I KNOW WHO SHAKE-SPEARE IS, BUT WHO IS RALPH FIENNES?
WHEN DOES JERRY HALL COME ON?
OH, JULIET? DO YOU WANT RED OR WHITE WINE?
EXIT
HE MUST AND WILL. PRITHEE NOW SAY YOU WILL ANON! GO ABOUT IT
PRITHEE NOW, GO, AND BE RULED, ALTHOUGH I KNOW THOU HADST RATHER FOLLOW THINE ENEMY IN A FIERY GULF THAN FLATTER HIM IN A BOWER
ONLY FAIR SPEECH
I THINK 'TWILL SERVE, IF HE CAN THERE FRAME HIS SPIRIT.
I HAVE BEEN I 'TH' MARKET PLACE; AND SIR, 'TIS FIT YOU MAKE STRONG PARTY OR DEFEND YOURSELF BY CALMNESS OR BY ABSENCE E IN ALL'S ANGER
MUST I GO SHOW THEM MY UNBARBED SCONCE? MUST I WITH MY BASE TONGUE GIVE TO MY NOBLE HEART A LIE THAT I MUST BEAR.....
THIS MUST BE HIS FIENNEST HOUR
TO SLEEP PERCHANCE TO DREAM... ZZZZ
I'D LOVE TO SEE HIS BOTTOM!
HEATH

'ROUND UP THESE HOOLIGANS'

Says No One

Drumcree, Thursday

THERE WERE no calls last night for drastic measures to stop the mob of violent hooligans who have embarrassed Britain by their disgraceful behaviour.

"They go out onto the streets with the express intention of picking a fight with the locals," said no one. "They quickly turn abusive and end up assaulting the police."

Law And Orange Order

Added no one, "They should have their passports removed and be banned from travelling anywhere away from their own homes.

"Their supposedly patriotic chants and colourful outfits are merely a cover for thuggery."

SUNDAY TIMES IN LEVY HOAX ROW

by John Ditherow

LORD LEVY has complained that two employees of the Sunday Times have been guilty of fraudulently misrepresenting themselves.

Both, he claimed, had pretented to be journalists.

"At first I was fooled," Lord Levy said, "when they said they were bona fide reporters covering a big political story, but then they gave the game away when they admitted they were, in fact, desperate hacks working for Murdoch."

Hax Evasion

Lord Levy concluded, "These people should stop trying to fool the public and get on with filling up their paper with rubbish about How The Pharaohs Invented The Atom Bomb."

"She's right, stupid! Take another hostage and get the set meal for four!"

FRANCE: EURO TRIUMPH

THERE WAS dancing in the streets of Paris as France's victorious Euro squad returned home from Brussels led by team captain M. Chirac clasping the glittering prize that is the E.U. Presidency.

"Our golden goal now is a single United European superstate", leading point scorer M. Jospin told the cheering crowd. "The hopeless England manager Tony Blair's defensive tactics of wait and see look hopelessly outdated."

"We know we're definitely the best in Europe," said Chirac, "as we've got the Germans' permission to say so."

YOBS

HUSBAND

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This position offers offers enormous variety. Approximately half of your time will be spent acting as Notices to Mariners Desk Officer - assessing data and preparing daft text and chartwork for Admiralty Notices to Mariners.

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TEACHER OF ENLISH - CPS
Commencing 1st September 2000

Northampton Chronicle & Echo

The Daily Hurleygraph

Britain's biggest-selling quality daily

Friday, July 14, 2000

Yes, It's Liz v. Anna In The Final!

By Our Tennis Staff Charles Phwoar!

WIMBLEDON has never seen anything like it!

Two of the all-time great self-publicists yesterday slogged it out for five hours for the ultimate prize – the chance to see themselves half-naked on the front page of the Daily Hellograph. And the battle of the semi-nude lovelies was one of the closest that the Telegraph has ever seen.

Daily Notsteffigraf

On the one hand, there was the fabulous 19-year-old Anna Korlegova, who despite losing in the first round continues to dominate women's tennis by posing in her underwear.

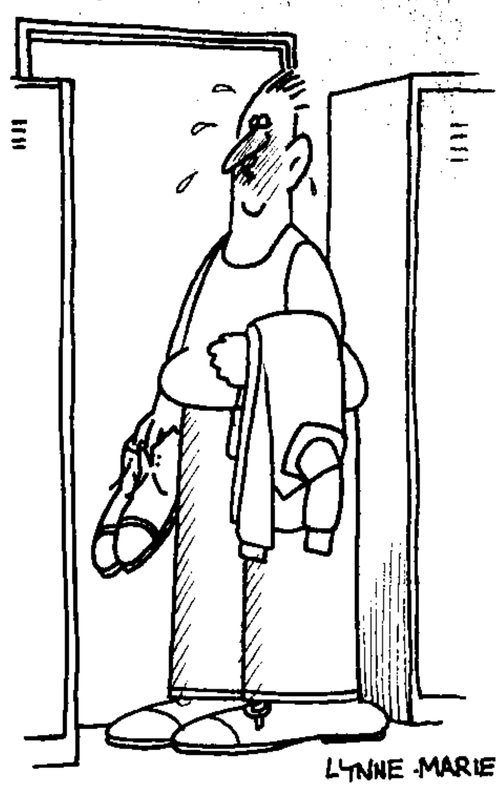
On the other, the legendary 39-year-old Liz Girley who, despite losing Hugh Grant, continues to dominate women's tennis by watching the odd match.

Top Seedy

The big question in the mind of millions of fans was which of these non-tennis players would have the most staying power *(Surely 'most revealing dress'? Ed.)* to win tennis's most coveted prize?

In the end, after a thrilling marathon, the result was a draw. Editor Charles Moore put both girls on his front page, and on all the inside pages as well.

Little-known health facts: changing rapidly into and out of a tracksuit is not a recognised exercise routine.



POETRY CORNER

In Memoriam John Aspinall, gambler, zoo-keeper and Zulu chieftain.

So. Farewell then
John Aspinall.
Amazingly you were not
Eaten by one of your
Tigers.

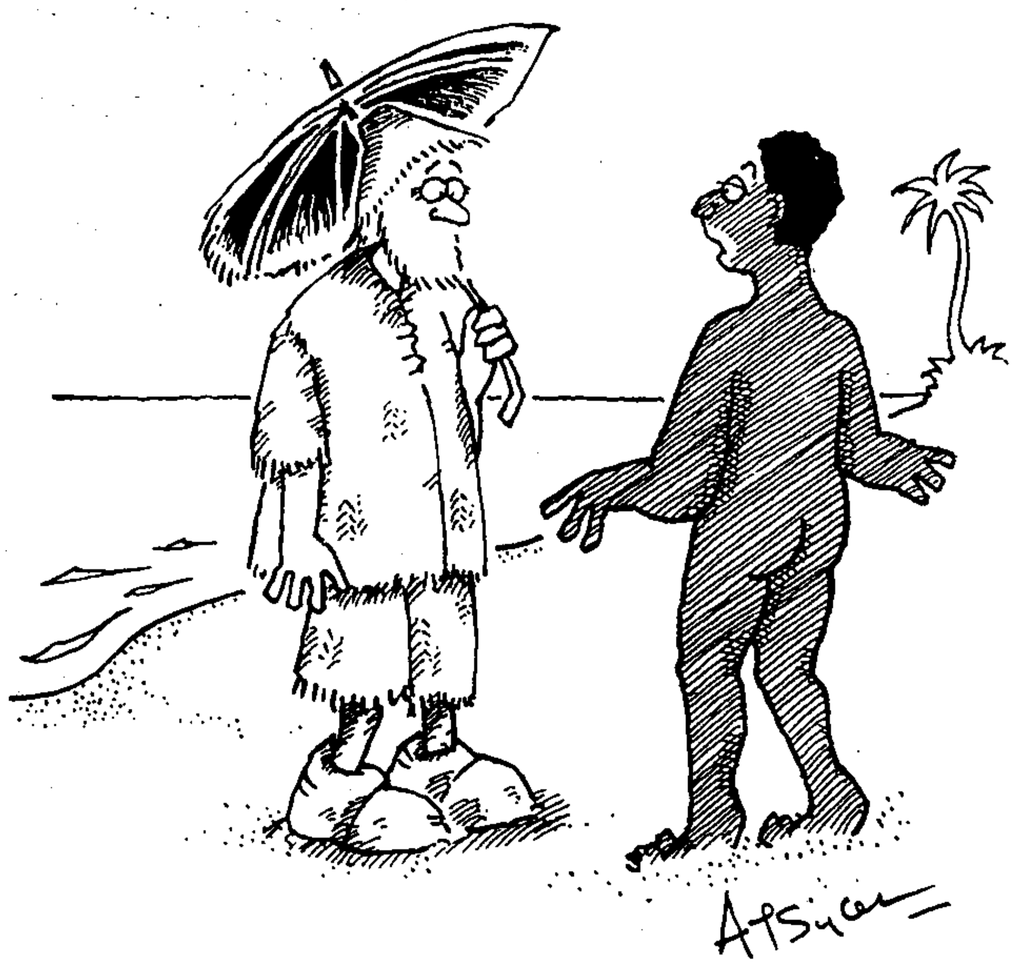
Keith's mum says
You will now be reunited
With your friend
Lord Lucan.

But Keith says he saw him
When he was on holiday
In Mozambique.

So you may have
To wait a while.

E.J. "Thribbers" (17½)

ROY of the LOSERS
ENGLAND HAVE LOST THE WORLD CUP TO GERMANY. AGAIN. THE 2006 TEAM ARE DEVASTATED.
IT'S SO DISAPPOINTING
2006
PLAYING AT HOME WOULD HAVE GIVEN US A BIG ADVANTAGE
YES, WE COULD HAVE STARTED FIGHTS ON OUR OWN DOORSTEP!
AND THE POLICE COULDN'T HAVE TAKEN AWAY OUR PASSPORTS!
THERE'S ONLY ONE CLAUDIA SCHIFFER!
ENGLAND
DEUTSCHLAND
COOPER



"I thought you said 'It's dress-down Friday' "

COURT CIRCULAR

CHELSEA

Wednesday: His Royal Paradine Sir David Frost today held his annual Royal Garden Party at Paradise Palace, supported by his wife, Lady Ocarina. Other members of the Royal Family present included the Earl and Countess of Wessex, the Duchess Fergiana, Mrs Camilla Parker-Knolls, the Mistress Royal, and the Honourable Tarara Boomdeay-Tomkinson. Guests from all walks of life (showbiz) were also present, including Sir Michael Caine, Sir Freddy Forsythe, Sir Bruce Forsythe, Sir Roger Moore, Sir Sean Connery and Sir Roland Rat. Those unable to attend included anyone of any interest or importance.

Exclusive To All Newspapers

WOMAN HATES LIVING IN COUNTRY

by Our Entire Female Staff
Deborah O'Boozley

A WOMAN who lives in the country has written an article in a magazine saying that she doesn't like it very much.

ON OTHER PAGES

☐ **The Big Town v. Country Debate – Is it heaven or hell?** ask hundreds of feature writers.

☐ **I Moved Out And Then Came Back To London**, write thousands of women columnists.

☐ **Why I Love The Country Even Though I've Never Been There**, claim millions more desperate hackettes.

HARRY POTTER IS HERE AT LAST

by Phil Space

AFTER months of eager anticipation it's out at last – my piece about the new Harry Potter book. It's the fourth in a hugely successful series of pieces that I've written this morning.

And, after all the speculation, I can finally reveal the title: "Harry Potter Is Here At Last", which was a closely guarded secret until 5 minutes ago when I thought it up.

This time the essential ingredients of the piece are the same (boy wizard... Hogwarts... single mother in café... loads of money... American film...) but it's much longer with a new darker theme.

I'm now attacking the marketing men, the media hype, and the sell-out to commercialism.

There are even rumours that I might end the piece by killing off one of my favourite clichés – "It's magic" – by writing about "How the magic has gone" instead.

© *Phil Space (exclusive to all newspapers).*

THE EURO
An Apology

IN COMMON with all other newspapers, we may have given the impression that no foreign firm would ever again invest in Britain unless we joined the euro immediately.

We printed this in good faith because it is what we were told by highly-placed sources in the Let's Get Britain Into The Euro Immediately Campaign.

Headlines such as "Billions Of Jobs Under Threat Unless Blair Says 'Yes' To Euro" and "Eur-all Going To Die Unless You Join" may have led readers to believe that the flow of inward investment into the UK economy had all but dried-up.

We now realise, since the figures were published yesterday, that, despite Britain's failure to join the single European currency, inward investment is now breaking all records. (See today's headlines in all papers: "Champagne Corks Pop In City As Foreign Cash Floods In", "Pound For Pound, Britain Is Tops" and "Cor, Look At Ffion's Dress!".)

We apologise for any distress caused to our readers by this confusion.

THE SUNDAY GRIMES
Pot Investigates Kettle

BY OUR INSULT TEAM

A POT last night made sensational allegations against the well-known Lord Kettle, suggesting that he had consistently avoided "being white".

Said the pot (Mr Rupot Murdoch), "Make no mistake, Lord Kettle is totally black and covered in filth. He is not nearly as clean as he makes out."

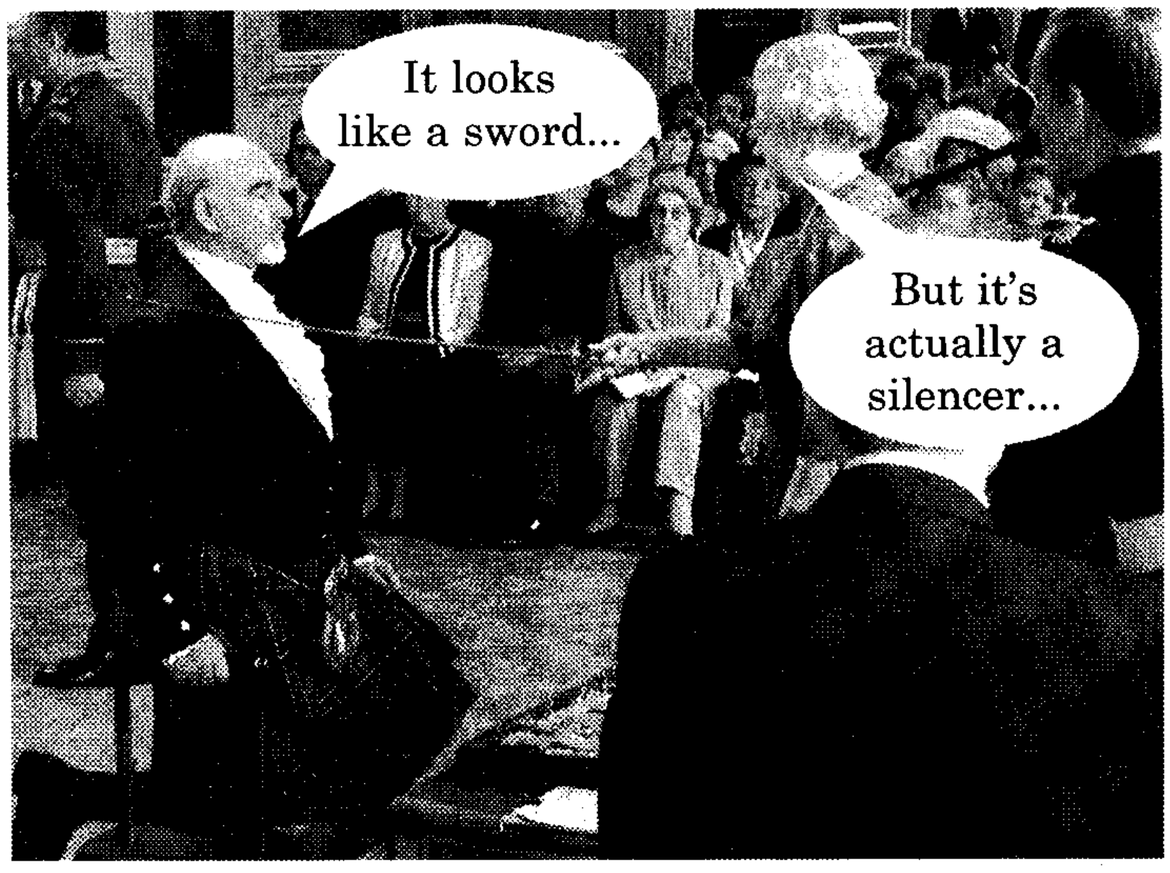
However, Lord Kettle denied he had acted improperly.

"In the 1998/99 tax year," he said, "I devoted my life to charitable works among the Kettle community. I am whiter than white."

He continued, "But why don't you look at Rupot? He is the one who is really black and has been thoroughly tarnished by a lifetime's association with muck and dirt."

Speaking from his New York tax exile, Mr Murdoch countered: "Lord Kettle is a devious, untrustworthy and disreputable item of kitchen equipment. And I should know."

BOND MEETS Q



BLAIR SHOCK AS SON HITS BOTTLE

by Our Entire Staff

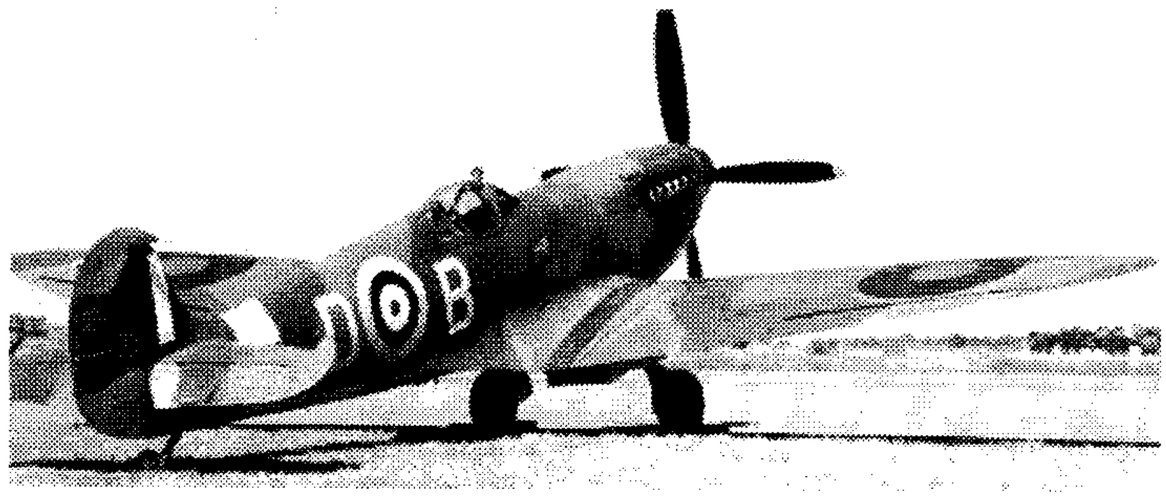
WE CAN exclusively reveal that the son of the prime minister of England was last night found flat on his back, unable to stand up or even to speak.

It was clear that he had been sick and had been at the bottle for much of the evening.

When asked to identify himself he could only make incomprehensible gurgling noises.

Yet it soon became apparent that this was none other than Leo Blair. This must surely be the most embarrassing *(continued page 94)*

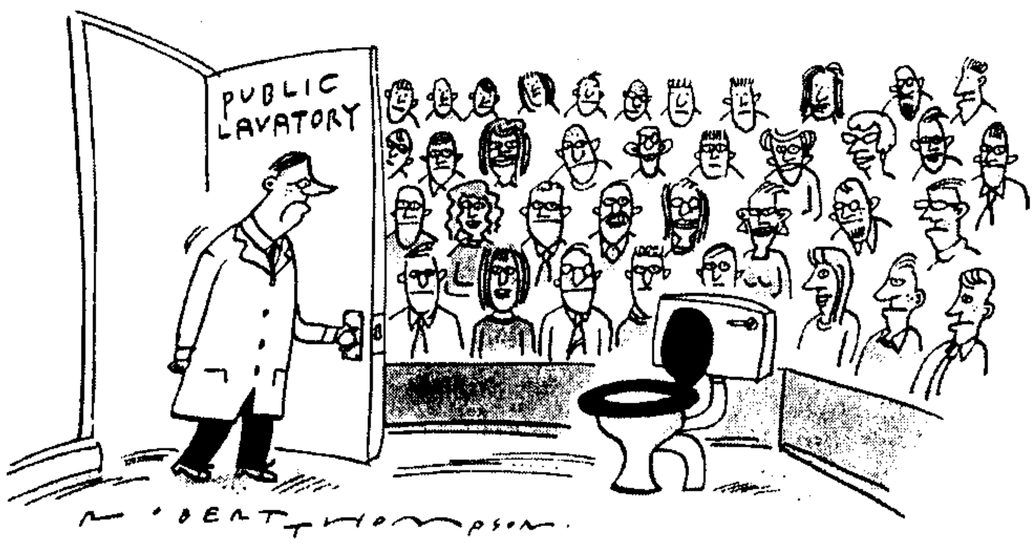
M.O.D. UNVEILS NEW PLANE



AFTER allegations by the National Audit Office concerning problems and delays in procuring defence equipment, the Ministry of Defence has today hit back by unveiling its brand new "super plane".

Known as the "Spitfire", this single-engine craft powered by a V12 griffon engine is capable of a mind-boggling top speed of 408mph and carries two .303 calibre machine guns. Its low maintenance means it requires only one cheery cockney engineer called "Ginger".

"This should really have Johnny foreigner quaking in his jackboots," said one delighted Air Commodore.



Teenage Drunkenness

Dr Utterfraud writes

AS A DOCTOR I am often asked "Can you dash off 800 words because we've just heard about the prime minister's son?"

The simple answer is "Yes, of course I can, though I'll have to ask for a double fee because it's short notice and my wife's got a ticket for the Centre Court."

What happens in most cases is that the teenager who has just finished his exams goes up West with a few mates and consumes a large amount of beer in a very short time.

The inevitable side-effect is that the patient is arrested, taken to the police station, where he gives a false name and is then plastered all over the media for the next 48 hours.

There is no known cure for this condition, which we doctors call... this isn't one of my best – can't I just write about Pete Sampras's ankle instead? *(No. Ed.)*

© *A. Doctor.*

SPECIAL CHARITY AUCTION

Lot 94:
Famous Old Bag

YOUNG BRITISH ARTISTS BY BIRCH

Sotheby's are hoping for half a million for an L.S. Lowry...
The Guardian
...which was first bought for a couple of hundred quid.
Just like our prices, only the other way round!
Guardian
No, hang on- er-I mean...

TV Highlights

Before They Were Famous

(BBC1)

HIGHLY embarrassing early appearances by well-known public figures, which include the Prime Minister Tony Blair, when he was a young, fresh-faced member of "The Labour Party" – plus Deputy PM John Prescott, playing a working-class lad with a social conscience.

Best of all is Jack Straw, whom we see here as – get this, a campaigner for civil liberties! Hilarious!

DIARY

BILL BRYSON'S MOON LANDING

My publisher – because even my books require a publisher (only joking!!) – suggested that as I'd written about everywhere else I might as well go visit The Moon. There and back in a week, he said – and with a bit of padding you'll complete the whole book in a fortnight.

"A bit of padding?" I said.

"Yup," he replied. "A bit of padding."

Padding! Wow! I gulped down another piece of asparagus (we were eating asparagus at the time, if you hadn't already guessed – I mean I could hardly gulp down another piece of asparagus if I wasn't already eating some, could I?!! I mean, eating asparagus isn't something you do while riding on a tram or brushing your teeth – not unless you're a *madman*!! Like, hands up anyone who knows anyone who places pieces of cooked asparagus in their top pocket along with their pens and pencils and assorted fluff before they go for their ride into work on a tram? Just as I thought – *zilch!*).

"Wow," I said. "Just a fortnight with a bit of padding."

"Yup," he said.

"A fortnight," I said. "That's just two weeks."

"Yup," he said.

"With padding," I said.

"Yup," he said. "With a bit of padding." "Wow," I said. "Two weeks – or a fortnight. Same difference, as we used to say in Iowa."

The rocket launch pad at mission control in Houston is truly something else. To say it stopped me in my tracks would be an understatement – but believe me it truly stopped me in my tracks. My notes tell me it's in the middle of a desert. And as deserts go, this is certainly some desert! It's almost as big as Iowa, maybe bigger, which is really pretty big. And sandy too – if you assembled all that sand you could make some pretty big sandcastles, but then who wants to make sandcastles these days, especially in Houston, of all places? Only very sandcastley-type people, and, hey guys, don't they have anything better to do?!

So I put on my space-suit, which was pretty much like an off-the-peg suit you could buy in downtown Des Moines only harder to walk in, and with something like an upturned goldfish-bowl (but thankfully with no fish in it!!) to go over your head. But I just have to say this, I wouldn't go sun-bathing in that space suit if you paid me. Well, on the other hands, perhaps if you paid me – hey, ho! – a reasonable amount, plus expenses, well now you're talking, get in touch with my agent, he'll sort something out, great!

So we're sitting in our seats in the rocket, belts on, someone counts down from ten (gee whizz, Mom, they still teach them arithmetic in Houston!!) and – *whooosh! whooosh! whooooooosh!* – the rocket takes off.

Taking off on a moonlaunch is an indescribable experience. It's not unlike getting into the family Ford with its leather interior and hand-operated windows to visit the local foodstore in Des Moines, only much, much faster. "Wow," I thought, as the rocket zoomed up in the sky. To be serious for one moment, the rocket itself was very nice and quite comfortable, if a little cramped, but on the whole, the experience was perfectly pleasant and quite normal with a charm all its own. What speed were we travelling? To be honest, my interest in these matters goes only so far, but it felt fast – very fast indeed. A lot faster than a garden slug going flat out in a garden slug race – not that I've ever heard of such an event. I guess you could say it's a figment of my over-fertile imagination!

Whooosh! Before you could say "knife", we were in Outer Space. (Though why anyone would ever possess the irrepressible impulse to say "knife" is frankly beyond me – I mean, when was the last time *you* found yourself unable to stop saying "knife"?!!! Don't tell me – I bet it was yesterday morning! Doh! I've made an idiot of myself again!)

What's Outer Space like? Much like Inner Space, I guess. Looking out the window, I could see there was truly lots of this Outer Space stuff all around us, like someone had over-ordered from the Outer Space depot in a big way and there was no sale-or-return agreement!! But, seriously, the main thing to be said about travelling in Outer Space is that it is truly very impressive. And pretty nice, too – especially if you manage to avoid those Murdoch satellite dishes! I mean, who wants to bump into repeats of I Love Lucy when you're trying to enjoy Outer Space? (I'm joking of course.)

Let me stop here for a moment to interpose two hilarious anecdotes. First, I was worried that the fuel might run out on us – but thankfully it didn't! And second, it struck me for one minute that we might land upside down on the Moon, in which case our helmets might fall off – but thankfully we didn't! Phew!

Ker-bump! So we landed on the Moon. My fellow astronauts – I forget their names, let's call them Phil and Joe – were keen to get out the rocket and do some exploring. "But hang on, guys!" I said. "Some of us have got some padding to do." So I started reading a dusty old learned tome about the Moon. Turns out the Moon is many thousands of years old, and basically circular, just like the Earth. But interestingly it doesn't have trees, and, perhaps because it is basically unpopulated, it lacks things we take for granted like big cities and McDonalds and Diet Coke and shopping malls and Ally McBeal. But apart from that, it's just like Iowa, though maybe not quite so noisy at rush-hour. Still, looking out the window, I must say a decent pub or two wouldn't have gone amiss.

So eventually, I decided it was time to join my two fellow astronauts – let's call them Jack and Ron – and take a look around. So I reached for the door-handle. Sadly, I couldn't for the life of me fathom out how to open it. Just my luck to have come all this way to the Moon and then not be able to get out and see it!

Next Week: The Journey Home To Iowa.

As told to
CRAIG BROWN

FOR THE LAST FEW WEEKS I'VE BEEN HAVING THIS SAME RECURRING DREAM.
IT'S VERY CORNY I KNOW, BUT I DREAM I'M COMPLETELY NAKED IN A PUBLIC PLACE AND EVERYONE IS LOOKING AT ME....
THEN I WAKE UP REALISING IT WAS JUST A DREAM, FEELING HUMILIATED AND VULNERABLE...
THIS COMMON DREAM THEME IS EASY TO INTERPRET...
YOU'RE JEALOUS JERRY HALL GOT THE STAGE PART OF MRS ROBINSON...
AND I HAVE A LOT OF ANGER TOWARDS MY AGENT...

Literary Review

What You Didn't Miss Part 94

The book that all the remainder shops are talking about...

My Life On A Plate
by India Knight

Day two. . .

■ SOME of us have work to do. Others of us just have novels to write instead, which is why Thursday morning finds me in the kitchen in full panic mood. *Concise Oxford English Dictionary, Roget's Thesaurus,* old copies of my *Sunday Times* columns: yup, it's time to deliver. And what with Robert's vasectomy and Kate's new bagel slicer I'd forgotten all about it until the phone call from my editor Araminta asking in her usual impeccably glossed and professional way "Where the fuck is that book, you stupid bag?".

Back at the kitchen table I dejectedly flick on the computer. We're talking cringe-orama. I go scarlet, then puce, then, er, some other colours, as I look through a chapter with a pretend interview with a ballet dancer.

Me *(sounding, frankly, pissed): "So are all male dancers poofs or what?"*

Him *(terse): "Look, I've read* Bridget Jones: The Age of Reason."

Me: *"Really? So do you like wearing those girlie tights?"*

Him: *"I'm serious. The drunken interview with Colin Firth. You're simply ripping it off."*

Me: *"Go on. You can tell me. Girlie tights?"*

Him: *"The chapter where Bridget goes to talk to Colin Firth. Everyone's read it."*

That was some mean look he gave me as he walked out. Some mean comment too: "Why not think of something original next time, huh?"

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Books & Bookmen

■ WITH many staff having been made redundant from Dorling Kindersley in recent months and the survivors fearing the worst from their new owners Pearson in terms of "rationalisation" and "exploitation of synergies", many have, not unnaturally, become resentful of how things have turned out for founder Peter Kindersley. Despite being the chief architect of the crisis that forced the company's sale, he came out of the debacle with a £100m war chest and is now sitting pretty at his organic farm in Berkshire.

As a result, the company's staff council and redundancy panel has contacted him with the suggestion that each member of staff working for the company as at 17 February – the date on which a massive package of job losses was announced – should receive an *ex-gratia* £1000 payment from his own pocket, the total cost of such a gesture being just 0.5 percent of the money that he gained from the sale. The letter argues that "this would be a very concrete way to show the gratitude you have already expressed verbally, for the contribution of all staff to the growth and final worth of the company".

Unfortunately, Kindersley is not of the same view. In a bizarre holier-than-thou reply which seems to put the loyal workers' request on a par with a street beggar's approach, he states that while "we have always given generously to many people and organisations", this has "always been allied to achieving a result – a cause (the environment) or a real need (serious poverty or health problems)". The staff council's suggestion, he goes on to say, "is outside these parameters and therefore it is not really appropriate".

■ IT APPEARS that the impetus for the axeing of Anchor (*Eye* 1005) came from Dame Gail Rebuck of Random House, who now also has a say in what happens over at Transworld HQ in Ealing following Bertelsmann's takeover of her mob in 1998. Mark Barty-King and Patrick Janson-Smith, as John Saddler's overlords, were keen to give the list another year to find a best-seller to underpin its future, but la Rebuck would have none of it. What is unclear was whether her intervention was motivated by corporate concern for the whole group's profile – or by the need to make a territorial strike to ensure the pre-eminence of her own similarly-positioned Vintage list.

■ AMONG those seemingly hit hardest by the slide into receivership last week of Biblios were Metro Books, headed by former Faberite Susanne McDadd, who told a trade paper that her company is owed a "very hefty five-figure sum" by the beleaguered distribution firm. Metro is having its own cash crisis at the moment, with several authors, including Maggie Gee, Brian Brivati, and *Daily Telegraph* science correspondent Dr Roger Highfield, awaiting long-overdue payments and former chairman Ian Savage trying desperately to get his severance money out of the company. McDadd has been giving the strong impression that the malaise is largely caused by the Biblios debt, but it has been wondered whether the cause of the trouble is not rather closer to home.

"You couldn't get that book down for me could you?"

■ ANDREW MOTION is doing an excellent job of making sure that he's the last poet laureate. This unique post has no salary, no job description and no guidelines from the Palace. But newspaper editors expect him to churn-out stuff regularly, so that they can poke fun at it.

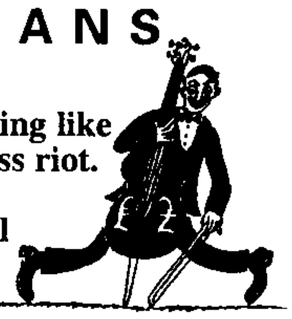
The Palace never interferes with the laureate's work, expecting that a quick introductory chat with Brenda and the examples set by John Betjemen and Ted Hughes are all the inspiration a muse needs. But it was a little perplexed when Motion produced nothing for Prince William's coming of age. When it found out that Anne's fiftieth and Margaret's seventieth were also being ignored the Palace felt obliged to make a tactful enquiry as to whether he'd remembered the Queen Mother's centenary.

Reassured that the laureate's quill has been in action for the event they wondered when it would be published. Dear old Andrew isn't sure. Although the grand lady's birthday isn't until 4 August, Motion is confused by the plethora of events going on beforehand to celebrate her centenary and can't make up his mind just when to bring it out.

Having seen it, Clarence House hopes he'll bring it out under the smokescreen of some bigger event to avoid too much media attention.

'Bookworm'

MUSIC & MUSICIANS



THERE'S nothing like a good middle-class riot. And in living memory the Royal Opera House has witnessed nothing like the riotous behaviour in the auditorium that scarred the opening night of the Kirov's touring Khovanshchina last week.

The surtitles had broken down. Again. And if that doesn't seem like such a big deal, you need to know a) that Khovanshchina is a rare piece with a complicated plot that nobody without a Harvard doctorate can fathom; b) that it was in Russian; c) that few of the punters at this distinctly social first night would have done any homework on the piece; and d) that the Royal Opera's surtitles seem to have broken down every other week since the building reopened eight months ago.

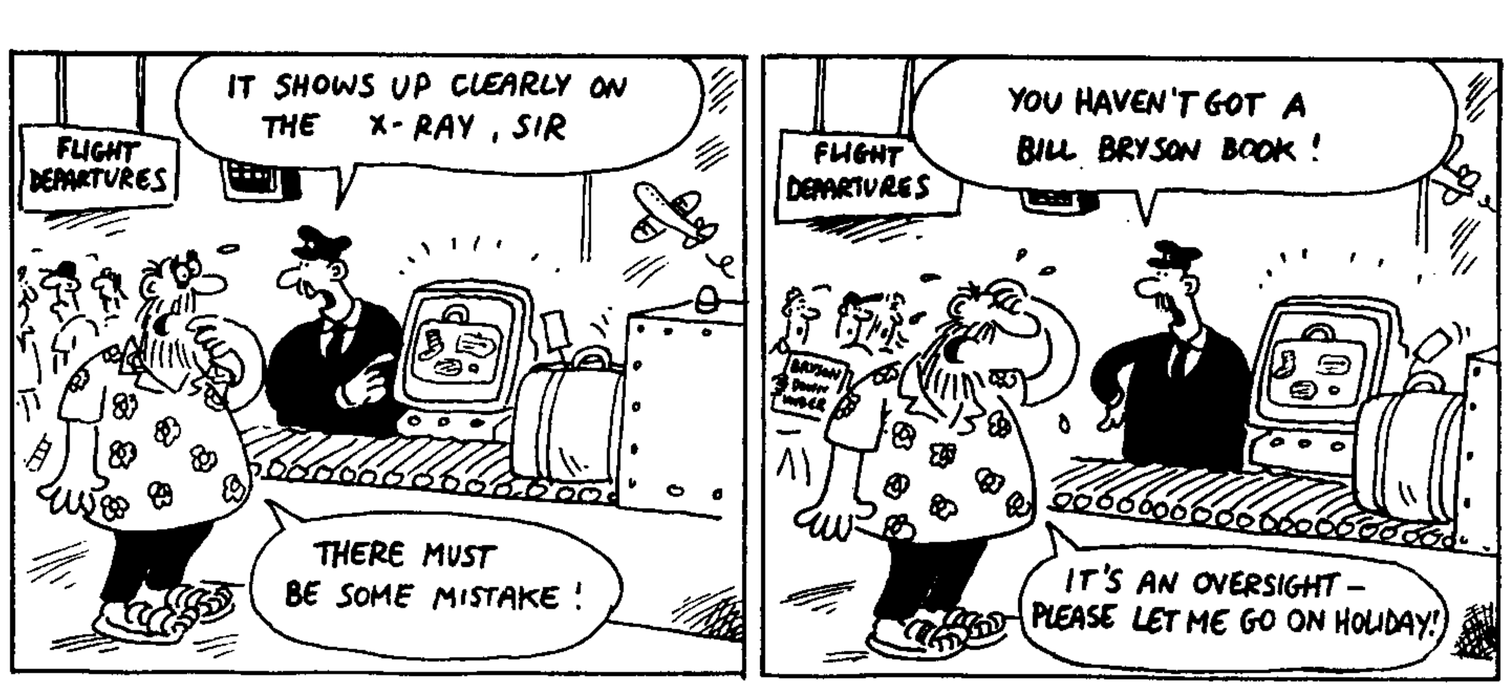
After the screen went blank, the audience started shouting (variously "Someone tell us what the hell is going on here?", "Who's the fat man in the fur hat?" and "I want my money back"). Then people started shouting at the shouters (mostly insults: "Peasants!" was among the more repeatable). From then it was downhill all the way.

But if the audience behaved badly, so did the management. In the old days the general director would have come on stage, made an eloquent, grovelling apology, sending nice warm feelings wafting through the stalls. But Michael Kaiser, the Royal Opera's meek, mousy and increasingly inconspicuous boss, was nowhere to be seen. Instead, a woman with a microphone came on and read a feeble statement from a piece of paper. And was booed.

Who will succeed Kaiser, soon to return to the US after so short a sojourn in Floral St? The "red hot troubleshooter" proved shy, retiring and ill-at-ease with the patrician ways of the ROH old guard. He was bullied by the overbearing figure of Sir Colin Southgate, chairman of the board. Southgate ("an uncultured slob" as a close colleague affectionately calls him) made life miserable for Kaiser, challenging his judgement, interfering with his plans. And it comes as no surprise that, since Kaiser announced his departure, Southgate has emerged as a contender for his job. So, curiously, has Jennie Page – no doubt to see if she could do any worse than she did at the Dome.

By far the best name in the running at the moment is John Tusa, the supremely civilised former Newsnight anchorman, ex-boss of the World Service and current MD at the Barbican. By all the laws of reason he should walk into the job. But then, opera and reason never did live comfortably together.

Lunchtime O' Boulez


FLIGHT DEPARTURES
IT SHOWS UP CLEARLY ON THE X-RAY, SIR
THERE MUST BE SOME MISTAKE!
FLIGHT DEPARTURES
YOU HAVEN'T GOT A BILL BRYSON BOOK!
IT'S AN OVERSIGHT – PLEASE LET ME GO ON HOLIDAY!

IN THE BACK

UP TO NO GOODWOOD

AN INSPECTOR from the ministry of agriculture has recently returned from an embarrassing trip to the Sussex Downs. He was despatched there after an anonymous letter to Mrs Paula Warre, a senior official at the ministry. It alleged that a company headed by one of Britain's oldest and richest landowners, His Grace the Duke of Richmond (left), and his son the Earl of March, has been ripping off the taxpayer for the last seven years.

After carrying out his inspection, the inspector reported that the allegations were justified. The matter has been referred to an investigation panel at the ministry, and the expected outcome is that the company will have to pay back a sum of money not unadjacent to £50,000.

The money involved was paid to the Goodwood estate, under something called the "environmentally sensitive area scheme". This was introduced during the Thatcher years, under the agriculture act, 1986. The act provided for taxpayers' subsidies of landowners who properly maintain areas judged to be environmentally sensitive. To qualify for the money, landowners must show that they are going to some lengths to keep the area as close as possible to a state of environmental sensitivity. In the 12 years since the scheme started £230m of taxpayers' money has been doled out to landowners.

In 1992, the Goodwood estate company entered into an ESA (environmentally sensitive area) agreement with the ministry. The agreement covered about 400 hectares on the Downs. The ESA subsidy has been coughed up by the ministry every year since. This year, in April, the ministry doled out £70,898. The same sort of money had been paid every year since 1992.

In 1993, the year after the agreement, the Goodwood estate started a new attraction for fun-lovers and enthusiastic motorists in the area. Called the Festival of Speed, it features all sorts of displays and celebrity races (this year ITV's celebrated commentator on Formula One racing, Murray Walker, put his hip out while taking part). One of the festival's most popular attractions is an assault course for tanks.

The festival attracts up to 100,000 visitors who have to be accommodated with car parks etc. Some 50 hectares of the ESA land were used for these not altogether environmentally sensitive purposes. The legislation allows for "derogation" for parts of the ESA, but a ministry spokesman told the *Eye*: "There was no application for any derogation here, and if there had been it would have been refused." The spokesman confirmed that the ministry had received an anonymous letter shortly before last month's Festival of Speed. The letter gave chapter and verse of what the writer regarded as the festival's breach of the landowner's responsibilities under the ESA agreement. For instance, it included a memorandum from Michael Mills, farms consultant to the estate, to Mark Dugdale, Cluttons land agent, on 30 March asking that "the whole area" between Molecomb Stud and Hart Hill be "harrowed and rolled", as it "needs to be in good order for the camp site in June". This seems not to comply completely with the ministry's regulations for environmentally sensitive areas, including "do not top the grass before 1 July". It was specially absurd, the letter also suggested, that a subsidised environmentally sensitive area should include a tank assault course.

Ministry officials visited the site, found most of the allegations accurate, and submitted the findings to a special panel.

The directors of Goodwood estate are the Duke of Richmond, the Earl of March, Robert Knight (finance director) and former Cambridge cricket blue Nigel Draffan. Mr Draffan is also a director of Cluttons, the blue-blooded managing agents of the Goodwood estate.

Complete banker

THE BANKS' sudden scrapping of their plan to charge for withdrawals from cash machines (ATMs) needs to be contrasted with the heroic defence put up by the banks' bosses when these charges were first questioned.

As recently as 18 April, the chief executives of the three biggest banks – Barclays, HSBC and Lloyds-TSB – went to the Commons to answer questions from the treasury select committee. Consistently forthright in his defence of the ATM charges was Matthew Barrett, chief executive of Barclays. He was asked by Labour MP Nigel Beard: "Would it be fair to say that the outcry over these charges has really surprised you?" Barrett replied: "I was surprised that something which was in the aggregate as customer friendly as this set of changes would raise angst... We decided to do something which cost us money because it was customer friendly on several fronts. It was a complicated story to get across, but the facts of the matter are that this series of changes will mean less money in our pockets and more money in the pockets of consumers than the system yesterday. Therefore, inasmuch as it was positive for the UK customer in the aggregate and will create behaviours and incentives in the system to improve it even further, I should have thought we should have got applause frankly."

Matthew Barrett

There was no applause. Twelve weeks later the charges were scrapped.

Fact to remember: Mr Barrett is paid £850,000 a year, plus about the same amount in bonuses.

Dam fine record

THE GOVERNMENT'S reason for continuing to support Balfour Beatty's bid for a £200m DTI grant to build a dam in the Ilisu region of Turkey which will render up to 25,000 Kurds homeless (see *Eyes passim*) is surely the firm's outstanding track record.

Ministers like to pooh-pooh the connection between Ilisu and the company's involvement with the Pergau dam in Malaysia, where Britain chose to ignore environmental concerns because of its lucrative arms contracts with that country. In the 1980s Balfour Beatty built a dam in Sri Lanka which turned out to have an irreparable leak. More recently Balfour Beatty has excelled itself by its involvement with a £1.2m bribery case currently in progress concerning a dam project in Lesotho.

In Britain Balfour Beatty's portfolio includes railways, canals and hospitals. Last October 30 Falkirk residents awoke to discover their gardens had collapsed into the Forth and Clyde canal, while Balfour Beatty was rebuilding a lock. The following day London Underground announced that the company was among the short-listed bidders for the public-private contract on the tube. Balfour Beatty's previous experience of public finance initiatives includes the PFI for London's new University College Hospital. Both the Treasury and the BMA have said they are not convinced that the plans for the new hospital offer the best value for money. London Underground executives meanwhile, are standing by their man, announcing on 5 July that Balfour Beatty has made their final short-list.

On the same day the Health and Safety executive issued its report on the Heathrow tunnel which collapsed during construction in 1994. The report described the project as "one of the worst civil engineering disasters in the last 25 years" and fined the perpetrators £1.2m. The company responsible was, er, Balfour Beatty.

OP in the air

IN A Commons debate on 28 June, the Lib Dem MP Paul Tyler raised once more the delicate subject of organophosphates as lubricants in aircraft engines, and the danger from them to the health of crews and passengers.

He referred especially to British Aerospace 146 airliners, which are used by the Queens Flight. Tyler quoted aviation health institute evidence to the House of Lords recently that "the failure of oil seals (on the filters) occurs in one in every 22,000 flights resulting in organophosphate exposure. At Heathrow, where there are 440,000 aircraft movements, this could affect 20 aircraft a year or some 2,000 passengers." At the same inquiry the British airline pilots association observed: "Despite the flight safety issues and health risks associated with the use of toxic compounds and reported incidents of cabin air contamination, neither the industry nor the government has fully investigated the issue."

Tyler gave details of appalling incidents of illness and breathlessness from such contamination on board aircraft in flight over Australia and Scandinavia (see *Eyes passim*) and accused the government of taking no notice. Ministers, he said, were guilty of "the most extraordinary and breathtaking complacency". This charge stung the responsible minister, Joyce Quin, minister of state for agriculture, who replied at length to the rest of the debate, into saying nothing at all about the matter.

This attitude cannot go on forever. The Australian senate inquiry into the leaking of organophosphates into aircraft cabins, especially on the BAe 146, is likely to report this month. Several pilots in Australia are suing their employers for injury caused to them through the leaks, and their actions are likely to be settled soon.

Meanwhile Paul Tyler reports that he has heard from BAe Systems, which make the 146. Their letter, he says, "does not deny any of the information I have related, but in a revealing phrase, it claims that the implication in a recent report that the issue is specific to the BAe 146 is inaccurate. In other words, other craft may be involved".

Up, up and away

IF MUGABE had lost the Zimbabwe election, the victorious MDC would almost certainly have re-opened investigations into the contract to build Harare airport – a contract plagued by rumours of all kinds of cronyism and corruption.

Such an investigation would have tested to the full the commitment on 27 June by minister of trade Richard Caborn that the export credits guarantee department (ECGD) is "determined to combat bribery in overseas contracts". Caborn's statement was in answer to questions from Labour MP John Austin, who was worried by reports of ECGD-funded exports beset by bribery (see *Eye* 1005).

Air Harbour, the firm that won the Harare contract amid so much local criticism, has as one of its principal sub-contractors the British construction firm Edmund Nuttal. Nuttal got a £30.5m loan to build the airport – underwritten by the export credit guarantee department.

TURNING BACK THE CLOCK

NOT CONTENT with merely demoralising staff and inmates by the botched heavy handed raid on Blantyre House in Kent, (see *Eye* 1005), it seems the powers now running the country's model jail are also intent on destroying its unique and long-nurtured community relations.

They have cancelled this year's annual Mencap fair – a day when inmates through fund-raising and business partnerships provide entertainment, activities and food for up to 1,000 disabled people and their carers. The event has been running for the past 10 years, attended and supported by local dignitaries and national celebs. Even Ann "Lock 'em up" Widdecombe has put in an appearance.

The new regime – put in place after governor Eoin McLellan-Murray and his deputy David Newport were suddenly relieved of their duties – has also cancelled inmates' work placements. A crucial part of the well-documented Blantyre rehabilitation success story – lowest re-offending rates, no violence, virtually drug-free jail – has been its ability to find work or training in the community for those nearing the end of their sentences. With employers often reluctant to take on offenders or ex-offenders, this is no mean task.

In the wake of the raid on Blantyre, companies such as Sunburst Commodity Trading suddenly found themselves without staff on which they had come to depend. Chris Mackie, divisional managing director, said his company lost thousands of pounds, because he was given no chance to advertise the jobs and find replacements for three inmates who had been forbidden to attend work. The explanation of new governor Chris Bartlett the following day did not help: "You may be assured that the discontinuance of the placement does not reflect any inappropriate behaviour on behalf of those that have been working for you and is not intended to infer any concerns over your company."

So why stop the placements scheme? A prison service spokeswoman said that some had been suspended subject to the on-going inquiry being carried out at the jail. Similarly the Mencap fair had been cancelled while the financial arrangements for the event were being examined.

The inquiry, now in its third month, is being conducted by the so-called Chaucer group of area managers whose "intelligence" that the jail was a hot-bed of criminal activity has already been proven to be wide of the mark. The suspicion now is that it is desperate to find anything to justify the hugely expensive raid by 100 prison officers and police in helicopters and vans. Particularly as the former governor and his deputy are said to be considering legal action because of the cloud of suspicion that inevitably followed their sudden removal. So far, it seems, the inquiry has found little. McLellan-Murray has been asked to justify 23 of the 16,000 licences issued last year to allow inmates out of the jail – a mere 0.14 percent.

Meanwhile the report into Blantyre by the chief inspector of prisons, Sir David "Rambo" Ramsbotham, still sits at the Home Office. Perhaps because it praises Blantyre and the work of McLellan-Murray and his team and is critical of area management.

Staff at Blantyre have written to the *Eye*, saying: "We are not woolly-minded liberals: we have not lost the plot. We work in a system that targets men with long sentences and challenges the way they think. We regularly beat the very targets set by our masters, but we do it in our own way. This is what has made us a target. This has been an attempt to discredit the prison, its staff and its inmates and undermine the chief inspector's report."

Trial without jury

DONALD PENDLETON was convicted in 1986 for the murder 15 years earlier of newspaper seller Bernard Clark, whose beaten body was found in a stream in Bradford. For 14 years in jail he protested his innocence, then last month, his appeal was heard.

Appeal court judges Lord Justice Pill, Mr Justice Sachs and Mrs Justice Steel agreed that his true defence – that he was nowhere near the crime scene and that he had given police an alibi and been ruled out as a suspect – had never been put to the jury. But without hearing any witnesses in support of that defence – not even Pendleton himself – the judges concluded there was "substantial" evidence of his guilt.

There is not. In 1971 Pendleton was a 20-year-old petty crook, with a police record for theft and burglary, but no history of violence. His conviction rested on the word of a man with a string of convictions for violence and on confessions Pendleton made after three days of police interrogation without a solicitor present about events which had occurred 15 years earlier.

He did not even recall that in 1971 he had given police an alibi that he had been with a man called Danny Smith at the time of the killing. That statement had been "lost" and only came to light two years ago as lawyers prepared for his appeal. Statements from several officers at the time made it clear they did not think that Pendleton was involved in the killing.

The police's chief suspect was a man, referred to only as "W.H". Some of his belongings were found on the dead man. He had soil from the stream where the body was found on his shoes and he had no alibi. A file was sent to the DPP, but no charges were ever brought and the inquiry was wound down.

Fourteen years later a man called Gordon Sharpe came forward and said he had information to implicate Pendleton and another man, John Thorpe. After three days of questioning Pendleton eventually told police: "Go on then, you've got what you want now. I admit it. I kicked his fucking head in. Are you satisfied?"

Ever since, however, Pendleton has consistently maintained he was nowhere near the scene of the crime. He said he confessed because he could not cope with the pressure of interrogation. He just wanted "the police off my back". But these were the days before the litany of miscarriage of justice cases had cast doubt on the value of uncorroborated confessions. His trial lawyers in 1986 decided the confession was too big an obstacle and ran a defence that he had been at the scene, but that a man called John Thorpe had done the killing. Pendleton was never called to give evidence on his own behalf. He and Thorpe were both convicted of murder and sentenced to life.

Since the trial Pendleton has been shown to have a low IQ and to be abnormally "suggestible, compliant and acquiescent". Tests carried out by forensic consultant psychologist, Prof Guisli Gudjonsson showed he "gave in very readily to leading questions and interrogative pressure". Gudjonsson concluded: "I have serious reservations about the reliability of the self-incriminating admissions."

Lawyers acting for Pendleton hoped that the new doubts about the confessions coupled with details of the missing alibi evidence would be sufficient to quash the conviction. But the judges concluded the confession was sound and that the alibi wouldn't have stood up. The fact that the jury were not even told he had an alibi or that he was eliminated as a suspect in 1971 did not amount to an "abuse of process", they concluded. Pendleton's lawyers are still trying to trace Danny Smith.

After the hearing Pendleton's solicitor Jim Nichol, now a veteran of miscarriage cases, said: "Don Pendleton's case is shocking. No one has ever heard his full case. He must be the only man in jail, convicted of murder without a jury. Instead of quashing the conviction and ordering a retrial, the judges simply substituted themselves. How can that be right?"

His lawyers will now take his case to the House of Lords, arguing that he has still been denied a fair trial. Meanwhile he remains behind bars.

What a liberty

ATTEND closely to the following passage in the *Daily Mail* of 12 June. It comes in a huge two-page spread about the recent award of £215,000 plus pension to former Metropolitan police officer Sarah Locker, who claimed prolonged sexual and racial harassment during her time in the force.

The *Mail* reported: "Usually staff with grievances seek the help of their union, the Police Federation, which can provide legal assistance. The solicitors who act for the organisation are Russell, Jones and Walker in North London. Mike Bennett, the former chairman of the Metropolitan branch of the federation explained: 'We would never entertain anyone going to an outside lawyer, simply because the cost would be exorbitant. With our solicitors, there was an agreement to keep the costs down.' However Mrs Locker employed the specialist civil liberties law firm Deighton Guedalla."

A problem which worries members of the Police Federation who have read this report is a difficult one: does their former chairman Bennett know his arse from his elbow?

Sarah Locker did take her complaints to the Police Federation. The Police Federation agreed to fund her case. The solicitors they agreed to fund were, er, Deighton Guedalla. As for the costs to the Police Federation, they are not exorbitant. In fact they are nothing. Since Sarah Locker won her case, all the costs will be met by the Metropolitan Police.

Suck it and see

INSPECTOR KNACKER has made the old *Not the Nine O'Clock News* sketch about a black man being arrested for being "in possession of dark curly hair" and "being black while driving a car" come true. Last week they arrested a black man for "sucking his teeth".

The vile offence was committed by – surprise, surprise – Delroy Lindo (above), the friend of and campaigner for Winston Silcott who, as reported in *Eye* 1004, has been charged with a total of 18 offences, some serious, some trivial, over the past four years. Every time the prosecution case has collapsed, been abandoned or the police version of events has not stood up to the scrutiny of magistrates, judges or juries.

The latest harassment came when he noted the numbers of two officers dealing with a car incident. Lindo was warned by them that "sucking his teeth" at them was offensive and that if he refused to stop, he would be arrested. And when he refused to get into a police car, they handcuffed and forced him in. He was held for five hours and only released after Lee Jasper, a black rights campaigner now in Ken Livingstone's office, intervened.

You can contact Paul Foot on 020 7287 3183 or the In the Back team on 020 7437 4017

In the City

AIDS is not the only threat afflicting the basket case economies of many developing countries. They are also constant prey to the pillaging of international scam artists offering to provide International Monetary Fund-scale funding solutions to their financial problems. Often these dreams are helped along with the promise of a hefty kickback into a Swiss bank account for ministers who sign up for the scheme. African countries and the tiny island nations of the Pacific have been particular victims of these scams.

Among the most active peddlers of these financial fantasies has been Roddam Q Twiss, the son of a former Black Rod of the House of Lords, whose personal predilection for not sparing the rod has earned him the nickname in certain City and rent boy circles of "Roddam from Sodom".

Operating from a council flat in Bethnal Green, east London, Twiss has for several years been promoting the mythical money generating merits of versions of the sovereign nation infrastructure private sector (Snips) facility programme often linked to another equally fictitious financing mechanism, the medium term note (MTN) market. No prizes for who gets snipped.

MTN is but another variant on the standby letter of credit, prime bank note and prime bank guarantee scams which generated millions from the needy and the greedy throughout the 1990s. Victims, such as the Salvation Army which lost $10 million (later recovered), are told there is a secret market known only to the fortunate few, central banks and a cartel of banking giants, in which such financial instruments are traded producing returns beyond avarice. The fact that those seeking to check can discover no corroboration for the non-existant market is explained by the top secret nature of the market and the measures taken by those so profitably using the market to keep it for themselves!

Snips is ingenious but relies on the basic principle of the con artist's art eloquently described by a veteran practitioner Chicago's Kid Weill: "All I ever did was to offer nothing for something to people who wanted something for nothing." Near bankrupt third world governments are offered – in return for a modest fee plus expenses – the opportunity to raise millions just by providing guarantees that they are assured will never be called upon for funds to be raised for major private finance initiative style projects, such as docks or airports, which will be self-financing after completed. Once signed, the guarantees are sold at deep discounts to the unwary as – you've guessed it – government guaranteed sovereign loans.

Twiss and a crew of allied conmen have touted the Snips/MTN scam in varying forms to the governments of Zambia, Zimbabwe, Malawi and Mozambique as well as the Pacific island of Palau which was to be assisted to a $500m international airport and other much needed projects. The money on offer in such schemes has been up to $1bn and never less than $500m. Twiss has claimed to be negotiating for deals worth $2.5bn. All that is usually required is the signature of the finance minister or better still the prime minister.

What is unclear because it is imaginary is the source of this funding. Which may be why Twiss is always about to finalise one of his Snips-style deals but never quite gets there. Even now he claims to be on the verge of a $1bn deal.

A number of these attempted scams have been disrupted by Scotland Yard's fraud squad, which has had a long time interest in Twiss. After obtaining intelligence of Twiss' negotiations word was passed to the governments concerned.

Twiss in turn has had a similar long-term association with law enforcement, and not just as a target. He has on a number of occasions been a police and customs informant. Twiss provided evidence against a trio of amateur swindlers who tried to steal £7.5m from Barclays Bank in 1987. He provided information which prevented a planned $10bn fraud involving letters of credit from the Agricultural Bank of China in the early 1990s. Two years ago he testified against a team who intended to launder £250,000 through accounts at the Royal Bank of Scotland. Detectives who have had dealings with Twiss suggest he turns informer when he believes the fraud will not work, or to gain goodwill for use on future embarrassing occasions, such as when he himself is arrested.

Needless to say those government ministers who have had dealings with "Roddam from Sodom" are not made aware of his less-than-lavish address or his criminal past. Instead he relies on rented offices and the help of well-known law firms who for reasons best known to themselves (ie, expected big fees) lend their names to Twiss's schemes. For similar reasons he has also been helped by two celebrated former stockbrokers, one the brother of a peer, and other City figures.

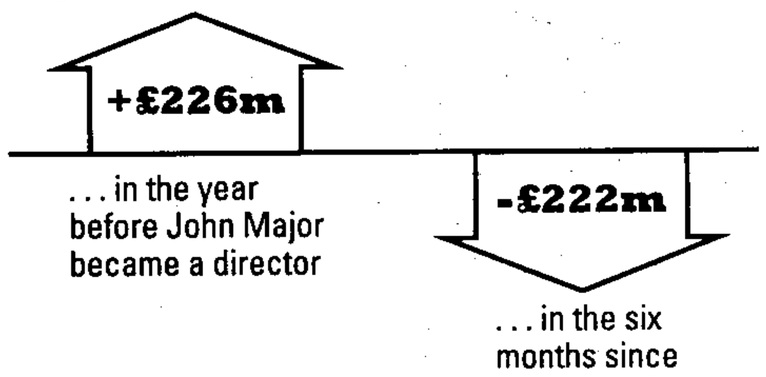
For many years Twiss has operated under the name of Dragon Resources International or similar corporate permutations. Six British registered Dragon companies were dissolved in 1997 or earlier. More recently he has used the Irish-registered Dragon International Resources. Then there is also Asset Management Associates and Grosvenor Trust, not to mention the Conserve, Available Homes and Delines Funds plus Event Investments. The overall purpose of these companies is described as charitable or humanitarian. But charity will begin at home with Twiss and associates pocketing any fees they can.

Twiss cleverly plays on his family background – his distinguished father Admiral Sir Frank Twiss was a sea lord and Black Rod for eight years in the 1970s.

Stock Horror

The curse of Major continues

Change in the value of engineering firm Mayflower . . .



He also admits to associates, if not to government ministers (hardly confidence inspiring), part of his criminal record, that involving sexual offences with schoolboys, saying it was all a long time ago and that his current "charitable" activities are proof that he is a reformed character. The facts – Twiss is reportedly known on the S/M circuit as "The Teacher" for his love of corporal punishment – and Snips suggest different.

Twiss was first convicted in 1967. Then aged 28 and a former school teacher, he was jailed for three years for seven offences of indecency with young boys. With another man Twiss had stripped, tied up and beaten the boys, one as young as 11. He had also required the boys to beat him. Passing sentence Mr Justice Lawton told Twiss: "Seldom can a court have heard a more sordid story of depravity. The picture of an 11-year-old boy being tied up naked to a bed and then beaten by two grown men is one which is revolting." It is unlikely Twiss goes into such details when admitting his past "failings".

Twiss also volunteers how he has helped the police with several inquiries. But he does not say that this followed a second three year prison sentence, this time for fraud involving a £5,000 car in 1983.

Former Lloyd's broker David Martin is only one of those who rued his dealings with Twiss. Martin worked for Minet Group when he was approached by Twiss in 1995 to enter into a business transaction for Minet's special risk services division. Martin commissioned a private detective to do a background check on Twiss. This revealed the previous fraud conviction and Twiss's "association with organised crime". However, Martin hid the truth from Minet and fabricated a report recommending Twiss as an acceptable business partner. When the real story about Twiss was discovered Martin was permanently banned from Lloyd's in 1997 and fined £20,000.

The International Chamber of Commerce issued a warning about the Snips scam three years ago. It estimated that countries which fell victim to the guarantee ploy risked their entire overseas earnings. The Cook Islands revoked guarantees worth $1bn; the Marshall Islands $100m. The ICC had earlier estimated that standby letter of credit and related scams such as MTN have separated more than $350m from the gullible since 1987.

The ICC and banking regulators advise investors and governments to steer clear of schemes such as Snips and MTN and their ever-updated variants. Hopefully, any government, however impoverished, would especially take that advice if it knew the Twiss truth.

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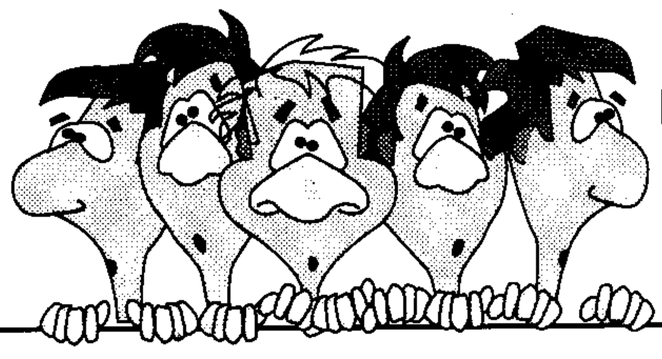

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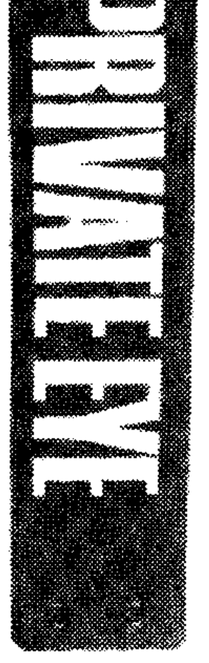

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PSYCHOLOGY DIPLOMA – (Dip.Psy.) Write WOOD TUTORIALS, Freepost Unifaculty, SCO1109, Renfrew, PA4 8BR

EYE NEED

CULINARY TOUR of the world in 30-year Landrover. Sold everything – need bond for carnet de passage: £6,000. 01786 880419.

ONE MAN BAND – still standing, just! B.O.I. sort-code 90.48.51, Acc/No 95427305.

CSA COCK-UP. Young family. £9,000 needed to clear debts. LloydsTSB 776310, 64133760. Much gratitude.

NON-CONTRIBUTORY young actors' and dancers' group for multi-ability, multi-ethnicity children seeks support to stay afloat until grant received. Community direct account sort code 089299, 65057836 or potential sponsors contact Box 1606.

SINGING BIRD snared by debt, invites miracles. £5,000 pays off bank. Gratitude, delight, energy. HSBC 30-40-18, 41094521.

GRANTLESS HUMANITIES Postgraduate Student seeks generous benefactor to complete degree. Halifax 11-06-30, Account 00491580.

RECOVERING from severe ME – need £10,000 to relax and heal. Box 0906.

WORLD YOUTH DAY
Sponsorship or donations needed to take children to Rome for a visit of a lifetime!
God bless you!
Box 4004.

GENTLE, SENSITIVE, abandoned mother desperate to escape with child from thuggish neighbours on sink estate, needs £40,000 to buy flat in peaceful area. Please help. NatWest 56-00-59, 29526566. Thank-you.

STRUGGLING Jewish single parent – talented ballet student daughter. Need help! HSBC 40-32-10, 61116630.

SET UP for sexual harassment claim. Determined to fight. Please help with legal costs. You could be next victim. Midland 40-26-01, 31179675. Box 2406.

DONATIONS WANTED to start handicapped school for children. Nationwide. God Bless. Miss Juanita Swyney (teacher), PO Box 106, Abu Dhabi, UAE.

MATURE undergraduate crippled by debts. Any help eternally appreciated. Barclays 20-25-85, 30261718.

DISTRAUGHT over nuisance neighbours. Trapped in social housing. Struggling disabled woman needs a new home. Any help greatly appreciated. Lloyds/TSB 77-49-01, 01247563. Box 0203.

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have a child suffering from
Colidium Membrain Icthyosis.
WE WOULD LOVE A HOLIDAY.
Sincere thanks.
Abbey National
09-01-26, 25595247.

MATURE STUDENT needs £15k to support family, pay debts, continue studies. Please help RBoS 83-19-11, 00171151.

PROBLEM ESTATE S.London – drugs, crime etc. Chance of safe home near parents. Self, two teenagers, cat. Grateful anything. LloydsTSB 30-91-59, 0215683.

DESPERATELY NEEDED self catering accommodation, central London or near, on compassionate grounds or low cost, for a very brave young lady and her mum to enable life-saving treatment, after years of suffering. Thank you and God bless. Box 2106.

EYE FINANCE

NEW WEEKLY MAGAZINE seeks equity funding. Unique new concept and format, proven business model, turnover £2M, 25% net margin. £600K required, £400K+ already under negotiation with investor syndicate. Enquiries:- Expresso Publishing, Suite 525, 29-30 Warwick Street, London W1R 5RD.

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CHELSEA – CHEYNE WALK houseboat for 2-6 months. Spacious, furn. 2 beds, big deck, dines 6, all services. £1,400 pcm 020 7352 1670.

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EYE LOVE

ARE YOU a sensual fun loving female, 38-48 and living in the North East? If you are, a tall, fit, warm hearted and confident professional male, 48, would love to hear from you. Box 2006.

VERY DIFFERENT chap, 44, company director based SW but London visitor, likes Blue Note, wine, food, conversation, tobacco and architecture. On the salt side of pepper, 5' 10' and slim, believed handsome, WLTM the woman 35-45 who likes the sound of this and is not afraid of motorcycles – to be with me for the rest of our lives. Box 0606.

MIDLANDS MAN, 35. Been most places, done most things. Likes cats, countryside, motorcycles. Seeks cat-loving soulmate. Photo please (of cat). Box 1706.

VERY SUCCESSFUL professional N/S male – tall, dark, considered attractive, 40s but looks 30s, unattached, WLTM confident woman for relationship. Wining, dining etc. Nottingham area. Box 1806.

CHARMING, GOOD-LOOKING male, 55, divorced, tall, slim and fit professional – seeks beautiful tactile, kind, slim lady for long term fun and good times. Surrey & South East. Photo please. Box 3004.

TALL, CULTURED, successful and very generous man, 40, Bath/South West, seeks a younger woman to spoil and pamper and to enjoy the summer with. I live life to the full – film, theatre, travel, eating out and eating in, laughter and the rich tapestry of life. If you would like a fun relationship with a man who really enjoys himself then please write to me with your telephone number to Box 2805.

HANDSOME (TOLD), 36, tall, successful male with great sense of humour and fun – seeks discreet liaison with attached or career lady. Let's put a bit of spark into life. Total discretion assured. S.W. London. gla99@dial.pipex.com or Box 2405.

AGE GRACEFULLY – never! London-based, slim, well-educated, warm, outgoing brunette, 47, looks and feels younger, enjoys jazz/blues and rock, reading, travelling, drinking, smoking and bridge – seeks unattached chap to enrich her life. Box 0106.

WILLING MALE, cultured and successful, 40's seeks strong-willed female who would welcome attention and honour. Box 0506.

MALE, 49 YEARS OLD seeks female for afternoon delight. Grangemouth, Falkirk areas. Reply to Box 0806. Photo appreciated.

GLOWING STAR fallen in the heart of the wild, wild west, will guide/illuminate life of man of: soul, character, brains and some means, who's no complete Methuselah, ogre, attached or ridden with sexual guilt. Hasten missive and daguerreotype. Box 0306.

FEMALE CYCLING touring partner sought by attractive, articulate man, 43 – for trips in UK and Europe. Box 2306.

MARRIED MAN, 49, London/ Warwickshire – fun-loving, slim, solvent – wants discreet sensuous relationship. Photo, letter and phone number please. Box 1006.

28 YEAR OLD London banker looking for attractive woman 20-40 for erotic liaisons. Photo guarantees reply. Box 0206.

HAPPY, ATTRACTIVE, sorted Edinburgh female (41) loves good company, eating out and cinema – seeks similar single n/s M 30-50 with gsoh for conversation and friendship. Box 1106.

PROFESSIONAL, EDUCATED, musical female, 32 (with 2 year old) seeks genuine male, 30s for LTR. Sheffield. Box 1306.

40ISH, SORTED, sought after chap, now finds himself in West Warcs, seeks attractive, restraining, non-mainstream, broadsheet reading partner to enjoy more examined life. Box 1406.

ATTRACTIVE LADY (40) with son and heir, seeks enlightened man from Mars (or Tellytubby Land) for a big hug. South West. Box 1906.

SLIM, ATTRACTIVE and intelligent female sought by tall, dark, energetic but easy-going 47 year old professional male for food, travel, culture and good times together. Photo appreciated. North East. Box 1206.

ELEGANT, WITTY,
successful, professional guy,
51 but fit,
suffering post-divorce trauma,
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gorgeous young(er) thing.
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Your photo secures mine.
REPLY QUICKLY WHILST
THE SUMMER LASTS!
Box 0706.

VERY FIT, attractive, blonde female, 26, seeks (occasional) well-educated gentleman 40-55. Please be imaginative, ready for adventure, with SOH. Photos preferred. glance12@aol.com or Box 0406.

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